PRISM

special operations in a chaotic world

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Acknowledgements

SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

PROLOGUE

As the commander of United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM), I welcome you to an issue of *PRISM* dedicated to special operations. SOCOM is responsible for the critical dual missions of providing the U.S. Geographic Commands with trained and ready special operations forces (SOF), as well as synchronizing their actions—we are uniquely created by law to perform both service-like activities and serve as a functional Geographic Combatant Command. In addition, SOCOM serves as the coordinating authority for the Department of Defense National Military Strategic Plan to Counter Trans-Regional Terrorist Organization (NMSP-CTTO). In light of the complexity of today's security environment, SOF are spread broadly across the spectrum of conflict. As a SOF enterprise we continually strive to be ready, and I am confident we are postured to address today's trans-regional challenges by virtue of our global perspective and authorities. Nevertheless, we must push ourselves to transform to meet evolving challenges, which entails leveraging developmental technologies and critically revisiting our structures and processes, while at the same time adjusting our tactics, techniques, and procedures to enhance effectiveness.

In just the past few years we have witnessed a varied and evolving threat environment consisting of: the emergence of a militarily expansionist China; an increasingly unpredictable North Korea; a revanchist Russia threatening our interests in both Europe and Asia; and an Iran which continues to expand its influence across the Middle East, fueling the Sunni-Shia conflict. All four of these state actors utilize forms of hybrid conflict short of war that frustrate and limit traditional forms of deterrence. Nonstate actors further confuse this landscape by employing terrorist, criminal, and insurgent networks that erode governance in all but the strongest states placing weak and fragile states fighting ethnic or religious insurgencies at risk of failure or collapse. Perhaps the best way to describe today's environment is "predictably unpredictable." Special operations forces provide asymmetric capability and responses to these challenges. Operating across the range of military operations, SOF are prepared to meet these challenges through discrete activities ranging from Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Counter-terrorism, Hostage Rescue/ Recovery, and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, to more enduring engagements such as Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, Security Force Assistance, Counterinsurgency, Foreign Humanitarian Assistance, Military Information Support or Civil Affairs Operations. Regardless of the ways in which we confront these adversities, our SOF must be innovative, adap-tive, and dedicated to seeking information dominance that increases our effectiveness.

This PRISM issue offers many articles that provoke thought and provide a basis for dialog on topics of interest to SOF, and hopefully, everyone committed to U.S. national security. As you read this issue, it is worth highlighting that nearly 8,000 SOF are continuously deployed in over 90 countries around the globe conducting the full range of SOF missions, and providing Geographic Combatant Commands with special operations capability and expertise required to support their operations in an increasingly complex security environment. Use the ideas and discourse of this PRISM issue to expand your understanding of SOF and the role they can play in our national defense.

– General Raymond Anthony Thomas III, Commander U.S. Special Operations Command

Kandahar City, Afghanistan from above, the same landscape Special Forces officers would view from Maholic Mountain.

Special Operations Doctrine

Is it Needed?

BY CHARLES T. CLEVELAND, JAMES B. LINDER, AND RONALD DEMPSEY

Reflections of a Special Operator in Afghanistan

On a cool, crisp morning in early April 2012, American and Afghan special forces struggled up the steep and rugged slopes of Maholic Mountain.[1] The mountain overshadows the former home of the deceased Taliban leader Mullah Omar on the northern outskirts of Kandahar City, Afghanistan. This band of men completed the challenging ritual each week as a way of building camaraderie while not out on missions. Upon reaching the top of the mountain, one can view the humidity rising off the ground in the distance creating a mirage-like effect. Looking further out, one can see Kandahar City with its vast collection of mud huts (*qalats*), strip malls, mosques, and two and three story buildings. Resting on top of a boulder, with a bead of sweat running down the side of his head, one special forces soldier sipped coffee from his thermos as he reflected on a recent experience in Northern Kandahar.

The special forces soldier began to relive an improvised explosive device (IED) attack three days earlier in which an Afghan District Chief of Police's vehicle was hit. The vehicle, an unarmored Toyota Hilux 4x4 pick-up truck, was ripped in half. Metal shards were scattered hundreds of meters away and a 3-foot deep crater was gouged into the ground. Two of the four Afghan National Police officers riding with the Chief that day were instantly killed. A group of American and Afghan National Army special forces soldiers dismounted their vehicles to secure the area and help render first aid. In the chaos of the situation, the District Police Chief was evacuated to a primary care medical treatment facility where he received treatment for his injuries, and returned

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to his security duties a month later at the same district center.

The special forces soldier sitting on the top of Maholic Mountain had been in close calls before; intense fire fights, rocket and mortar attacks, IED attacks, and brutal hand-to-hand combat, but none of that mattered to him now. While reflecting on the recent IED attack, he began to see the bigger picture. Why was it so important to run across an uncleared field under enemy fire to save the District Police Chief or any other Afghan security forces when a vehicle was just ripped in half by an IED? The District Police Chief was a charismatic leader who appealed to and united the different Afghan tribes in the district despite their tribal dynamics. He was an integral element of a critical Village Stability Operations (VSO) plan crafted by the Special Forces Advanced Operating Base (AOB), eight Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alphas (SFODAs)[2], and Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations teams working alongside two battlespace owners, the interagency, and Afghan National Security Forces in Kandahar Province. The goal of the VSO program was to promote governance, security, and development from the bottom up, starting at the village level, with the ultimate goal of defeating the Taliban insurgency and legitimizing the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA).

Looking back to 2002, *Operation Enduring Freedom II*, it was unnatural for special operations forces (SOF) and conventional forces (CF) to integrate and mutually support each other's operations. Special forces and other government agencies had proven a powerful team at the beginning of the Afghan conflict. Less smooth were the initial relations between SOF, particularly special forces, and

conventional forces when they were introduced to consolidate the gains following the overthrow of the Taliban. Today conventional units provide platoons to assist SFODAs with security while the special operators deliver timely and accurate information, local situational understanding, and access. The AOB coordinates significant key leader engagements with village tribal leaders while conventional forces facilitate Afghan provincial and district governance participation. Conditions have improved in Kandahar Province and violence has decreased to the point that Kandahar City has begun to provide basic services such as trash pickup. The Taliban's ability to hold sway over the populace and to undermine GIRoA has been marginalized. People have started to believe in the legitimacy of GIRoA and the security forces in many places once under Taliban influence.

In his final sip of coffee before descending down the mountain, the U.S. special forces soldier wondered, how do we avoid having to relearn the same hard lessons in the next low-grade war?—a thought shared by many seasoned veterans who served repetitive tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over 10 years into the long war, the U.S. Army published Army Doctrine Publication 3-05, its first ever attempt at Special Operations doctrine. Sixty years after the Army's first special operations units were formed, the time had arrived for writing how Army special operations contributes to achieving the military objective assigned to it.

Change

In August 2012 the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), at the urging of the then Commanding General of the Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Major General Bennet

Sacolick, commissioned Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-05, "Special Operations." This was in response to SOF's undeniable contributions to the long war and the need to update its doctrine in the face of a decade of war. In addition to Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, and Special Forces, the effort integrated the roles and missions of the Ranger Regiment, Special Mission Units, and the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command, providing the Army and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) with a first attempt at a comprehensive Army Special Operations doctrine.

This article reviews the effectiveness of the doctrine four years later, by examining why it took 60 years, why the doctrine proved necessary, why the Army needed the parent command, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), to ensure proper concept integration among all Army SOF, and what thinking and organizational gaps remain. ADP 3-05 clarified the conceptual framework for Army SOF. Generally, SOF organizes around two fundamentally distinct requirements; the first includes forces for short notice raids anywhere on the globe to execute kill/capture operations, hostage rescue, or to secure material or facilities designated by national leadership. Dubbed "surgical strike" these operations are largely unilateral, conducted typically with little notice, and attempt to reduce uncertainty through robust full spectrum intelligence collection before execution. The second special operations requirement, special warfare, focuses support to host nation forces and nonstate actors whose military purposes align with those of the United States. Special warfare—which includes missions from Foreign Internal Defense (FID) to Unconventional Warfare—has become increasingly important around the globe as the United States seeks and supports growing numbers of countries fighting against terrorist and insurgents. The principal maneuver force for special warfare is the U.S. Army's Special Forces, capably augmented in FID operations by the U.S. Marine Corps special operations teams, with indispensable enabler support provided principally by U.S. Army Special Operations, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs teams.

The purpose of the doctrine is to address gaps in thinking and organization for persistent conflicts that focus on the human domain and increasingly take place in the "Gray Zone" of the conflict continuum—that uncertain space between peace and war.[3] It has been four years since ADP 3-05 was published and an evaluation of its role in shaping subsequent doctrine, organization, training, leadership and education, personnel, and policy demonstrates its importance and the positive effect it has had on the SOF enterprise. Specifically, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) has enhanced its ability to plan, prepare, and execute its core operations and activities to defeat the threat and win in today's complex environment. Furthermore, special operations doctrine has made a substantial impact on the larger Joint Force, the interagency, and policymakers by educating these practitioners about SOF capabilities and why the "Gray Zone," persistent nature of many contemporary conflicts is best met with a precise balance of CF and SOF. ADP 3-05 helped pave the way for emerging joint doctrine in the soon to be published Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning, and the Joint Concept on Human Aspects of Military Operations. Even with all the progress and forward momentum the doctrine facilitated, there remain gaps both

in thinking and organization relevant to persistent conflicts. There is a need for a new appreciation and recognition of special warfare as a primary pillar in our national defense policy as the country returns to rebuilding its political warfare expertise. The recent emphasis on Irregular Warfare, the confirmation of special operations as an Army core competency, and the acceptance of the U.S. Army Functional Concept for Engagement are several efforts within the Army that illuminate the need for a new appreciation and recognition of special warfare as a primary pillar in our national defense policy and approaches. Recently, several initiatives emerged to satisfy this need for a new appreciation. Project Gray is an example of an initiative of the U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence in cooperation with National Defense University to promote conversation through a series of publications, forums, and events with academic, government, and military partners and other interested parties on how we think and talk about the Gray Zone.[4]

Causes and Symptoms

The first cause to highlight is the United States military's failure to capture best practices and lessons learned from past irregular conflicts related to CF-SOF and SOF-civilian agency interoperability. Today's military, despite the best efforts at jointness and Goldwater-Nichols, relearns hard lessons every time "civil-joint-combined" action is required. The process for planning and execution of complex, irregular warfare efforts remains largely ad hoc 30 years after the organizational reforms of the 1980s. This discovery learning makes unity of effort between CF, SOF, and the interagency elusive with one significant effect being each develops an independent one-dimensional

view of the environment. This is particularly apparent outside the Afghan and Iraq combat zones, where the United States and its allies and friends are attempting to stem the rise of transregional violent extremist organizations. Doctrine must drive us to value the criticality of the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) construct in campaign design and execution.

Both Sun Tsu and Clausewitz teach us that we have to know ourselves and our adversary, as well as the kind of war we are about to wage. Arguably, we may have failed at times on all three points. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world in the war on terror, and most recently in Ukraine, Libya and Yemen, the battlefield quickly told us that what the U.S. brought to those fights was not sufficient. For example, the rapid adoption of new structures, Special Operations Command (Forward), Provisional Reconstruction Teams, and the Asymmetric Warfare Group were a testament to adaptability in response to nonconventional enemies. But the need to create such critical components during the fight begged the question, does the United States have a coherent vision of warfare and a meaningful description of what that vision means for how the U.S. fights? The question looks increasingly relevant when we consider what it will take to win against violent extremist organizations like ISIL or al-Qaeda, or to counter Russia's "New Generation Warfare," China's three types of warfare, or Iran's deft use of surrogates, such as Lebanese Hezbollah.

Secondly, aside from a lack of interoperability prior to September 11, 2001, the general military doctrine community held a myopic view of U.S. special operations capabilities. SOF was incorrectly viewed only as a supporting enabler to conventional forces. Campaigns

were the purview of either Corps or higher headquarters, or in the joint world, the Combatant Commanders, or when committed to traditional military action, the Joint Task Force (JTF). The five-phase model (as outlined in Joint Publications 3-0, Joint Operations and 5-0, Joint Operation Planning) accounted for SOF as either knitting indigenous assets to the JTF or for the conduct of direct action (raids). This changed slowly, at first after Vietnam, then with each U.S. military venture abroad since, culminating more rapidly with the post 9/11 Global War on Terror and the recent recognition of formidable irregular and unconventional threats from increasingly belligerent nation states.

The hostage rescue mission became politically relevant in the 1980s and spawned a cottage industry that today has become the world's foremost surgical strike capability. Early on these dedicated strike forces were rightly harbored as strategic assets, to be used when needed and otherwise set aside for emergencies. That was to change significantly after 9/11 when policy called for proactive measures against threats against the homeland. The cottage industry grew to an industrial scale. Special operations raids, essentially "hyperconventional" operations companioned with drone-assisted strike operations, became popularly seen as the new 21st century American way of war. These select units set aside two decades earlier for hostage rescue, despite their growing prominence and broader mission sets in Iraq and Afghanistan, are still viewed in this way. To the general public, many civilian leaders in the executive and legislative branches, and even most in uniform, this singular surgical strike SOF narrative came to be what SOF was known for. Hollywood reinforced this impression, and given the lack of education on SOF at the service professional development schools, there was little to counter a lopsided view of SOF.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, SOF placed significant value on the combination of strong light infantry skills, intelligence tradecraft, a deep understanding of culture and foreign languages, the development and employment of surrogate forces, the conduct

Specialist Justin Young, U.S. Army

Coalition security forces conduct a surgical strike raid on rooms housing Taliban operatives.

and orchestration of sabotage and subversion, and the use of Psychological Operations. These are essentially the elements of unconventional warfare (UW) and its form in permissive environments, FID. However, the rising threat from Communist, anarchist, and religious extremist groups using terror to promote their aims gave rise to a different sort of SOF formation, and the earlier skills became overshadowed by perceived quick fixes through surgical strike actions. This view was reinforced at the time by leaders who put Vietnam in the "never to be repeated" past. UW skills lost favor and the mission itself was regarded as no longer a military requirement, belonging instead to civilian intelligence.

Though the limits of surgical strike operations on their own are well understood by special operations planners, they are becoming increasingly evident to policy makers and strategists as well because the character of war is changing. While we must have the most dominating and lethal Joint Combined Arms Maneuver (JCAM) capability in the world with an Army to deter and defeat any foe, the sophisticated nature of the battlefield of tomorrow will demand options beyond just JCAM. Consequently, the more effective U.S military JCAM capabilities and deterrence, the more likely our enemies will avoid opening the pandora's box of U.S. lethality, and the more likely they will fight us in the uncertainty of the Gray Zone.

In search of solutions short of the commitment of large U.S. conventional forces there is growing reliance on the indigenous-centered warfighting side of SOF, special warfare, and the work of specially organized conventional assets. SOF is desirable for their low visibility, low cost and moderate risk; this approach has proven successful in places like Colombia and the Philippines, and even in Iraq and Afghanistan it has resulted in those two countries' most effective warfighting formations. However, this approach takes longer and thus opens U.S. political and military leadership to criticism. Problems are inevitable as well because in these cases the U.S. essentially does not "own" the campaign. Instead, partner nations provide the mass, much of the fires, and some of their own logistics and intelligence for these efforts. The goal is to achieve the political objectives of our allies with them doing most of the fighting for their cause and in doing so gaining an acceptable outcome for the U.S. The key lesson from 15 years of this long war is that any permanent solutions have to be indigenous, particularly if the U.S. finds itself lacking the will, money, or domestic political support to secure a win unilaterally. ADP 3-05 provides not only a better understanding of the two halves of SOF, Special Warfare and surgical strike, but also the benefit of properly blending them alongside conventional and interagency efforts for collaborative effects.

The third challenge to getting SOF doctrine accepted is the lack of a model that adequately accounts for the centrality of the human element in today's warfighting. Consistently unsatisfying results from U.S. military campaigns from Vietnam to the present point to something fundamentally wrong with the model used by the U.S. security establishment not only in analyzing threats but also developing concepts in response. USASOC posited in their 2012 "ARSOF 2022" strategic plan the emergence of a human domain of warfare. Using as a model the example of the ultimate recognition of the air domain that ultimately led to the separation of the Air Force from the Army in 1947, USASOC

claimed the human domain emerged primarily because conventional tools (hence responses) built for the other domains had diminishing utility in securing U.S. policy objectives in an increasing number of contemporary situations. International norms brought on by globalization and technology have rendered problematic the traditional use of military force against many of today's adversaries. U.S. enemies, state and nonstate, are adeptly avoiding U.S. strengths, and resorting to the timeless ways the weak have fought the strong, through insurrection, revolution, and rebellion, using the tactic of terror to full effect in the age of hyper connected social media.

While ADP 3-05 does not specifically mention the human domain, it does describe the domain and make the case that SOF is a primary maneuver force. The human domain model has subsequently been adopted for further study by SOCOM, which by extension is the owner of the human domain. While the model remains under discussion there has been an oblique nod for its utility from the Joint Staff with the ongoing development of the Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations. More needs to be done, particularly at the headquarters and institutional levels, but it is a start.

The Solution: ARSOF Doctrine

ARSOF wrote ADP 3-05 in an effort to better inform military leaders about how their core operations and activities, namely unconventional warfare, fit into the Army's core competencies. ADP 3-05 provides an overview of Special Operations, Core Operations and Activities, and Command Structure. It explains special operations in a nuanced approach through the elements of combat power. Perhaps, the most vital aspect of ADP 3-05 is the framing of two critical capabilities: special warfare and surgical strike. The two terms describe what ARSOF provides to the Joint Force and the Interagency. Clearly defining these two capabilities helps.

In simple terms, surgical strike is fundamentally the hyper-conventional raid, and special warfare is indigenous-centric warfighting. Each has its own distinct operational application. SOF operational art is the proper blending of the special warfare and surgical strike

Special operations core operations and activities[6]

capabilities to achieve operational effects. They are fundamentally different, but mutually support one another, and the nation needs a world class capability in both.

Special warfare is the execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force with a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.[7] Special warfare provides the United States with an alternative to unilateral counterterrorism efforts that typically produce limited long-term effects and potential political risk. Some of the characteristics associated with special warfare include agile, scalable, and flexible formations capable of independently waging campaigns in support of small conflicts or wars. The risk level is palatable to decisionmakers because of the low visibility and smaller footprint, particularly appealing in a fiscally constrained environment. Lastly, special warfare enables regional partners through development of their security capabilities, creating a strategic reserve similar to what Henry Kissinger presented in his Foreign Affairs essay in 1954 on *Military Policy and Defense of the "Grey Areas."*[8]

Surgical strike is the execution of precise activities that employ SOF in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets, or influence threats.[9] These activities provide decisionmakers a sophisticated range of options in support of regional and national objectives while strictly adhering to the principles of joint operations outlined in Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations. Surgical strike provides a scalable direct action

capability employed in counterterrorism, counterproliferation, hostage rescue, kill/capture operations against designated targets, and other specialized tasks of strategic importance.[10] This critical capability engages global targets discriminately and precisely based on a high level of certainty versus special warfare where the threat can be far more ambiguous.

Another key aspect of ADP 3-05 recognizes that a portion of the range of military operations is uniquely SOF's, particularly ARSOF's. Unconventional warfare, counterterrorism, and counter-proliferation fall within the ARSOF core competency and emphasize the human domain: "...the totality of the physical, cultural, psychological, and social environments that influence human behavior to the extent that the success of any military operation or campaign depends on the application of unique capabilities that are designed to influence, fight, and win in population-centric conflicts."[11] SOF, particularly United States Army Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, and Special Forces, have a deep understanding of the human domain and, therefore, are best suited to be the maneuver arm for population-centric operations. In an increasingly flat world where the velocity of human interaction is rising exponentially on a global scale, it is the human domain that, if ignored, will allow our adversaries to exploit the United States and its global network of partners. Together, the land and human domains comprise strategic landpower, a concept which serves to institutionalize CF-SOF interoperability in order to facilitate better understanding and synchronization of capabilities between the Army and SOF, maximizing the complementary and reinforcing effects of both through unified land operations.

Evaluating the Effects of the ARSOF Solution

Special Operations Doctrine is making a difference by helping the Army and the Joint Force Commanders achieve their objectives while providing policymakers realistic and feasible options. A quick examination of ongoing operations in Iraq combating ISIL strongly supports the claim that special operations are having measurable impact. In response to ISIL seizing Mosul and Tikrit in June 2014, SOF began surgical strike operations in August 2014, with special warfare operations starting in January 2015. Together, these efforts altered ISIL's intended trajectory for establishing an exclusive Sunni caliphate.[13] In an August 2015 press briefing, then Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno stated, "ISIL has been blunted somewhat. We're kind of at a stalemate. It's important we continue to support them [the Kurds]… and continue to retrain the Iraqi Security Forces to build up the capabilities, so they can conduct operations."[14] More recently, Deputy Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in a July 5, 2016 interview indicated that ISIL's indiscriminate terror attacks are actually a measure of success for the United States and its partners. Blinken stated, "What we're seeing, I think, is ISIS actually lashing out because against every way we measure this—the territory they control, the number of foreign fighters and fighters overall, the money, the propaganda—they are down against every single measure."[15]

These effects and successes demonstrate the effective application of SOF operational art as a fiscally and politically sustainable strategic tool, in which special warfare and surgical strike capabilities are properly blended, achieve operational effects, and meet the U.S. policy objective of maintaining Iraqi sovereignty, while managing escalation and credibility risk. Further, analysis of the threat trends
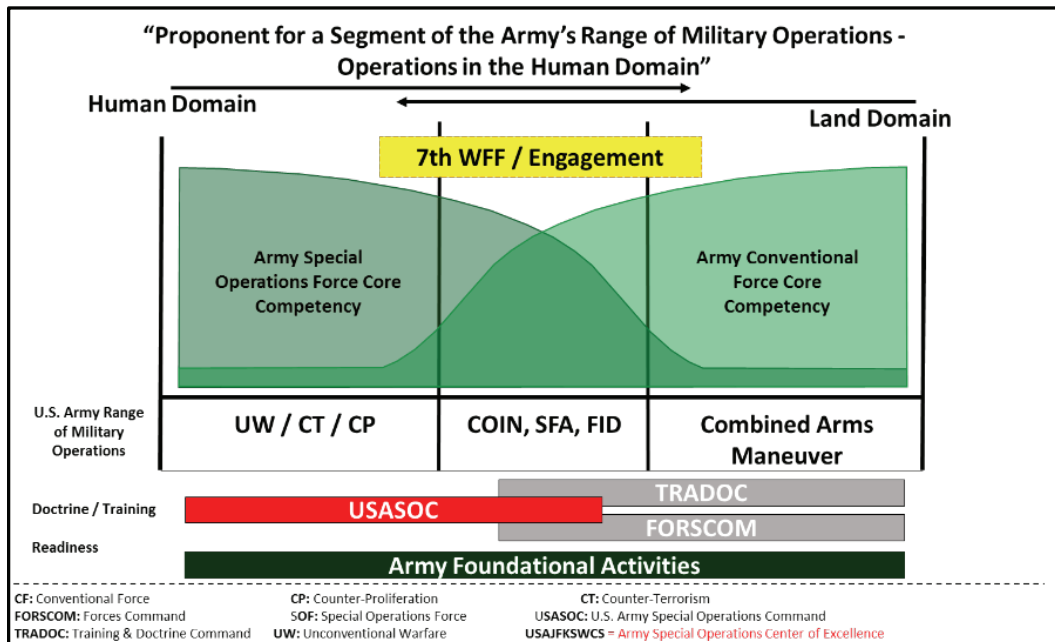
Land Domain + Human Domain = Strategic Landpower[12]

in tactics indicates that ISIL has changed its strategic approach as the result of ongoing operations targeting the group's leadership, foreign fighters, its money, and propaganda. This provides evidence that the formulation of SOF strategy, operational plans, and tactical actions in Iraq required a fuller understanding of the human domain—on winning the contest of wills. The ongoing operations in Iraq demonstrate how special operations doctrine is making a difference—ARSOF's capabilities, deep study of the human domain, and specialized skill sets are built to increase decision space, to influence trajectories of emerging threats, and to provide expanded sustainable strategic options. These effects and successes demonstrate the effective application of SOF operational art as a fiscally and politically sustainable strategic tool, in which special warfare and surgical strike capabilities are properly blended, achieve operational effects, and meet the U.S. policy objective of maintaining Iraqi sovereignty, while managing escalation and credibility risk. Further, analysis of the threat trends indicates that ISIL has changed its strategic approach as the result of ongoing operations targeting the group's leadership, foreign fighters, its money, and propaganda. This provides evidence that the formulation of SOF strategy, operational plans, and tactical actions in Iraq required a fuller understanding of the human domain. The ongoing operations in Iraq demonstrate how Special Operations Doctrine is making a difference—ARSOF's capabilities, deep study of the human domain, and specialized skill sets are built to increase decision space, to influence trajectories of emerging threats, and to provide expanded sustainable strategic options. Special Operations Doctrine in this case provided a framework for senior leaders to make

informed decisions on what SOF brings to the problem set and how to best employ and synchronize Special Warfare and Surgical Strike capabilities to produce effects. Understanding the culture, complex social networks, and possessing an ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in uncertain and hostile environments in Iraq demonstrates the effect of deep study of the human domain—on winning the contest of wills and defeating the threat as indicated by Deputy Secretary of State Anthony Blinken above.

ADP 3-05 was the first step in answering the ARSOF crisis of identity fueled by lack of understanding of who ARSOF is, what the force does, and the full range of options and capabilities that ARSOF provides the nation. ADP 3-05 provides a common frame of reference and a cultural perspective. Supporting this is TRADOC's, "The U.S. Army Operating Concept, Win in a Complex World," released in October 2014. The document specifies special operations as one of seven principal Army Core Competencies constituting our Army's strengths and strategic advantages, while providing a focus for leader development, force design, and training.

The doctrine provides an ARSOF perspective on the operational environment and the nature of the threat that emphasizes population-centric environments in the human domain. This thinking is growing and gaining momentum as evidenced in key developments such as TRADOC identifying the development of situational awareness as the Army's number one warfighting challenge.[16] Additionally, the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence, U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence, and select collaborators are developing solutions to integrate collection, analysis, and warning intelligence from the Gray

Zone to achieve situational understanding in current and future operational environments.

The SOF community embraced ARSOF doctrine operationally and institutionally through the implementation of ARSOF 2022, a three-part series that was published in the *Special Warfare* magazine.[17] The series outlined six priorities, broken down into lines of effort to reflect command emphasis on the most critical aspects of ARSOF, including implementing doctrine, providing strategic direction to address the gaps and seams, and refocusing future force development. Organizationally, USASOC realigned its subordinate regimental headquarters to form the 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) in support of planning, preparing, and executing its special warfare capabilities. 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) organizes, trains, equips, validates, and deploys regional experts in support of Theater Special Operations Commands, Joint Force Commanders, U.S. Ambassadors, and other government agencies as directed.[18]

On November 30, 2011, then Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter W. Chiarelli, designated the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) as the United States Army Special Operations Center of Excellence (SOCoE). This action institutionalized cooperation between the SOCoE, the United States Army Combined Arms Center, TRADOC Centers of Excellence, and the Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC), and expands special operations and conventional force interdependence in the institutional Army. The SOCoE functions as an agent of change by organizing and developing ARSOF's special warfare capability and addressing the gaps and seams by developing capacity through training and education, force development, and connected experimentation with SOCOM.

ARSOF doctrine and its practitioners are primary contributors in a community of interest focused on spurring conversation about warfare, conducting warfare experimentation (wargaming exercises), and influencing Joint Doctrine around anticipating the emerging operational environment and evolving unified land operations. Future American military and civilian leaders must visualize the future environment, interoperability, and threats influenced by variables and megatrends that constantly change the strategic landscape. Drilling down deeper, the United States and its partners' response to those threats will increasingly occur in the Gray Zone.

These Gray Zone challenges, as many senior military leaders, analysts, practitioners, and scholars describe, require constant adaptation, innovation, and institutional agility.[19] It takes a comprehensive look at the future environment to discern what capabilities are required to address Gray Zone adversaries and hybrid threats of the future. ARSOF doctrine strategically communicates the efficacy of SOF capabilities through the promulgation of special warfare and surgical strike as viable solutions to campaign design and CF-SOF interoperability.

Way Ahead

As the United States military evolves and adapts to complex environments and uncertain futures, Joint Force Commanders (JFC) should expect CF and SOF tactical and operational forces, organizations, and capabilities to generally function as they were designed. While challenges still remain, integrating CF and SOF in the same environment is an option for the JFC to exploit. The JFC must realize

SOF is not a substitute for CF. Rather, it is a necessary adjunct to the capabilities of existing CF.

Special Operations doctrine is making a difference, but there are gaps in thinking and organization that remain relevant to persistent conflicts. At the senior levels in the United States government, special warfare must be considered as a primary pillar in national defense policy alongside surgical strike. Revisions to Title X and Department of Defense Instruction 5100.01, "Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components," (2010) are required to illuminate special warfare and distinguish it from surgical strike capabilities. Future versions should highlight the characteristics associated with special warfare: agile, scalable, and flexible formations capable of independently waging campaigns in support in small conflicts and/or wars. There are also still gaps in doctrine, specifically with regard to leader development and recognizing and defining the human domain. The United States military must invest in formulating doctrine and strategy which fundamentally change how we execute leader development across the joint force, fully embrace and master the nuances of the human domain, and facilitate interoperability at all levels to complement and enhance conventional forces and SOF capabilities to
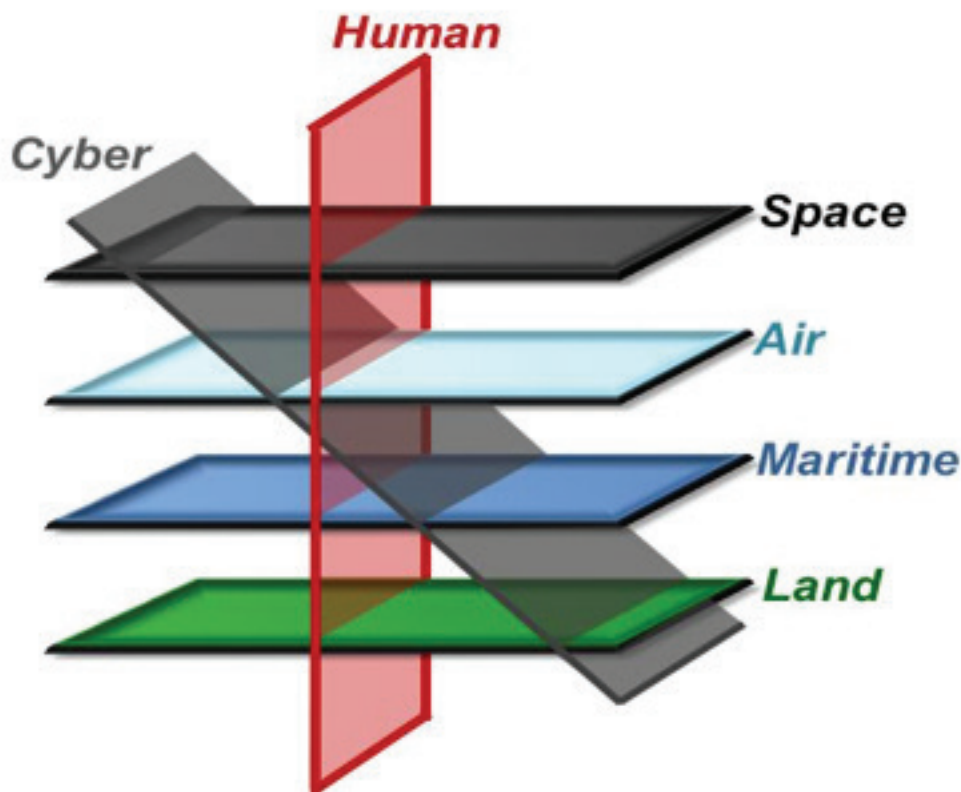
Cross Domain Synergy: Campaign planners can understand the complex environment by considering each domain and its effects on others.[20]

effectively address Gray Zone challenges and hybrid threats.

Leader Development

The military must invest in leader development across all the services that educates and informs tactical and operational leaders on the complementary efforts of CF and SOF, and emphasizes an informed approach to achieve collaborative effects. Leader development is essential to cultivating competent and adaptive leaders as creative and critical thinkers who are multidimensional problem solvers. It creates leaders that are capable of understanding the past and current decisionmaking and behavior of friendly, neutral, and adversarial actors, and enables them to be successful and effective across the full spectrum of operations from the tactical to strategic levels. The SOF cells in the Army's Centers of Excellence are an example of a step in the right direction to integrate ARSOF Professional Military Education (PME) and ADP 3.05 into the different CoE branches and Warfighting Functions programs of instruction.

Conflict Continuum

To maximize efficacy of special operations capabilities, further changes must be made to doctrine addressing current training, and education for campaign planning must recognize the importance of the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environments. This will mitigate seams exploited by our adversaries. An evolved conflict continuum highlights the necessity to operate in the human domain. An evolved doctrine will emphasize the nature of the conflict continuum as fundamentally and primarily a human endeavor, a contest of wills, and identify the activities necessary to position and prepare the Joint Force to contribute to politically supportable military objectives, enduring outcomes, and national objectives. These activities include shaping and deterrence through the application of political and special warfare approaches.

Human Domain

Winning in the human domain requires its own concepts, concepts that the SOCoE, in conjunction with Combined Arms Center, ARCIC, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) and the interagency are capable of developing in support of unified land operations. It is from these human domain concepts (the equivalent of "Air Land Battle" for the Land Domain) that doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) requirements are derived. The Engagement Functional Concept provides the foundation that underpins the human domain. The engagement function consists of the related tasks and systems that influence the behaviors of people, security forces, and governments. This functional concept enables the Army to operate more effectively in the land domain while fully accounting for the human aspects of operations by providing lethal and nonlethal capabilities. Further structural reforms in our Army, SOCOM, Joint Staff, DOD, and the larger interagency are necessary. Winning in the human domain complements joint efforts in the land, air, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains—creating synergy and necessary unity of effort against elusive threats that are increasingly operating in the Gray Zone.

Conclusion

The special forces soldier at the beginning of the article demonstrated the importance and recognized the necessity of special operations

doctrine when he wondered if any of the lessons and best practices learned in Afghanistan would ever be captured for future campaigns. America cannot afford to continue relearning and repeating history in future operating environments. Furthermore, the increasingly complex and uncertain nature of the future environment only reinforces the premise that the United States military must invest in doctrine and strategy to fundamentally change how we develop leaders across the Joint Force and fully embrace the human domain. Doctrine and strategy must facilitate interoperability at all levels to complement and enhance CF and SOF capabilities to effectively address Gray Zone challenges. Future doctrine and strategy must include the human domain and emphasize the interdependence of forces, including interagency partners, into all aspects of leadership education, campaign planning, training, and operations. Future doctrine and strategy should describe how SOF and CF must continue to develop interdependence to improve the Joint Force Commander's ability to execute across the range of military operations by combining the capability and advantages of each force, and maximizing the complementary and collaborative effects of both. Finally, we need to continue momentum to change the rudiments of how we think and talk about warfare and capture it in concepts and doctrine in response to similar challenges. We owe it to our seasoned veterans of the long wars. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] Maholic Mountain is part of Firebase Maholic, which is named after Master Sergeant Thomas D. Maholic, who was killed in action 24 June 2006 in the Kandahar Province, near Ghecko, Afghanistan when he was fatally struck by enemy small arms fire during a cordon and search mission.

[2] The SFODA, commonly referred to as a detachment or team, is composed of 12 personnel who have undergone a rigorous assessment and selection process to meet the demands of difficult, high-risk, and politically sensitive missions. Each member maintains a high level of proficiency in cultural awareness to include a language capability with expertise in one of the following specialties: operations and intelligence, weapons, medical, communications, and engineering. The SFODA is designed to organize, equip, train, advise or direct, and support indigenous military or paramilitary forces engaged in Unconventional Warfare or Foreign Internal Defense activities. Refer to U.S. Army Field Manual 3-18, Special Forces Operations, dated 28 May 2014 for more information.

[3] Joseph L.Votel, Charles T. Cleveland, and Will Irwin. 2015. "Unconventional War in the Gray Zone." *Joint Forces Quarterly* 80 101 - 109.

[4] The following link provides access to Project Gray: http://www.projectgray.org/. National Defense University is hosting the Project Gray Symposium, October 19 – 20, 2016, on Russian Engagement in the Gray Zone at Fort McNair in Washington DC.

[5] As Doctor Hy Rothstein from the Naval Post Graduate School points out in his critique of USSOCOM, Unconventional Warfare in Afghanistan.

[6] Headquarters, Department of the Army. 2012. "Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-05, Special Operations." Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 31.

[7] Ibid

[8] Henry A. Kissinger, "Military Policy and Defense of the "Grey Areas"." *Foreign Affairs* 33 (3), 1955.

[9] Headquarters, Department of the Army. 2012. "Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-05, Special Operations." Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 31.

[10] Ibid

[11] Training and Doctrine Command. 2014. "U.S. Army Functional Concept for Engagement." *Training*

and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-8-5. Fort Eustis, VA: Department of the Army, Feb 24.

[12] Special Warfare Magazine. 2013. "Foundational Concepts for Special Warfare." Special Warfare (Special Operations Center of Excellence, United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School) 26 (2): 16.

[13] United States Army Special Operations Command. 2015. *Explain how ARSOF Alters the Trajectories of Crises. Information Briefing*, Fort Bragg: United States Army Special Operations Command - General Staff 9.

[14] Army Chief of Staff GEN Odierno press briefing. http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/613683

[15] David Sherfinski, State Dept.: *'Indiscriminate' attacks a measure of success in fight against ISIS*. News, Washington, DC: The Washington Times. Accessed July 6, 2016. http://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jul/5/state-dept-indiscriminate-attacks-measure-success-/.

[16] http://www.arcic.army.mil/app_Documents/ARCIC_AUSA-Flyer_Army-Warfighting-Challenges_18MAR15.pdf

[17] Special Warfare Magazine. 2013. "ARSOF 2022." Vol. 26. no. 2. Fort Bragg: Special Operations Center of Excellence, United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, April - June.

[18] 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) Mission Statement

[19] This was outlined in the introduction of the United States Special Operations Command (USASOC) Strategy 2035.

[20] United States Special Operations Command Human Domain Concept, 5 September 2014. See also the United States Army Multi-Domain Concepts being developed by the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command.

The Special Forces patch designates the wearer as the most specialized expert in unconventional warfare, but the unit still has inefficiencies that can be improved.

Need Authorities For The Gray Zone?

Stop Whining. Instead, Help Yourself to Title 100. Hell, Take Some Title 200 While You're At It

BY JAMES Q. ROBERTS

As we strive to confront enemies operating in the Gray Zone—the fog-filled twilight zone between war and peace, where state and non-state actors employ threats, coercion, cooptation, espionage, sabotage, political and economic pressure, propaganda, cyber tools, clandestine techniques, deniability, the threat of the use of force, and the use of force to advance their political and military agendas—U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) forces are often frustrated by a lack of authorities to act. Short of war and beyond the parameters set by the 2001 Congressional "Authorization for the Use of Military Force" (AUMF) we may judge our Title 10 authorities[1] inadequate to the task, or at best a remarkably poor fit.

This article encourages U.S. special operations forces (SOF), and other DOD elements, that are seeking to contain, parry, or otherwise respond to Gray Zone threats to take full advantage of the authorities that do exist within the United States Code. By smartly leveraging the authorities that the special operations community and our interagency partners do have, the United States can, in fact, do a lot.

But to do so will require imagination, vision, stamina, salesmanship, guile and a keen understanding of our interagency partners, their cultures, authorities, and prejudices. Sounds like an environment and a task ready made for special forces types!

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Finding Title 100

A close follower of U.S. Code might be saying, "What do you mean? There is no Title 100 in the U.S. Code!" Not to worry, here is how you find this elusive tool box. As a SOF Gray Zone warrior you arrive (more often than not at the U.S. embassy) with a rucksack full of Title 10 authorities. These include the ability to engage with partners, and under most circumstances, to build their capabilities for special operations, combating terrorism, and general ministry of defense management. In some instances, they include execute orders that allow SOF to advise and assist partners in operations, subject to some peacetime (and interagency) constraints. In all cases, they include the right to self-defense, and the defense of U.S. interests when under direct attack.

But Title 10 is not "Title 100:" a powerful combination of authorities attained by blending the authorities of interagency partners. You may love them or you may hate them, but your Central Intelligence Agency brothers and sisters in the Station have a large basket of Title 50 authorities[2] that can be brought to bear on many Gray Zone phenomena. These include intelligence collection activities as well as authorities for equipping, training, engaging, advising, and conducting operational actions with partner intelligence, military, and security forces. So far so good—if we can just get along with the Station, we can employ, or help them employ, Title 50.[3]

Both SOF and the Station are beholden to the Chief of Mission (COM), usually an Ambassador, sometimes, a Charge d'Affaires. Either way, the COM reigns supreme in peacetime, empowered as the President's direct representative to the host nation, and per the Letter of Instructions to Posts, signed by the President, in charge of all U. S. Government (USG) activities, other than "those under the command of an area military commander."[4] He or she is also empowered by Title 22, which governs the Department of State (DOS) and describes USG diplomatic responsibilities. These include the management of diplomacy, but also an overarching responsibility for the entirety of the U.S. relationship with the host government in all its dimensions. Continuing our mathematical approach, SOF and the interagency team can now employ Title 72 (Title 50 plus Title 22), with a lot of good will and huge doses of the requisite schmoozing.

Finally, many County Teams today have a representative from the Justice Department or the Federal Bureau of Investigation, usually known as the Legal Attaché (Legatt), assigned to the Embassy. He or she is there to execute federal law enforcement activities under the guidance provided in Title 28.[5] The Legatt interfaces with the host nation Ministry of Interior and various other security forces, on liaison matters for U.S. law enforcement purposes. But they may also provide training and assistance to host nation law enforcement units and agencies. These activities are also fully coordinated (in theory) with the country team and approved by the Ambassador. Title 72 plus Title 28 from the Legatt gets us to Title 100. Be ready to repeat the requisite schmoozing throughout this stage as well.

I can hear all the naysayers already. "Will never happen!" "Too many people can say 'no,' while almost no one can say 'yes.'" "The agency cultures are too different to permit constructive interaction." "Who pays?" "Who is in charge?" On and on. I've heard it all. Please stay calm and listen (or read) for a few more minutes.

Despite the above complaints and many others (which we must not neglect), there have been instances (outside of war zones) where under the overarching leadership of an Ambassador a group of players from State, Special Operations Task Forces, the Intelligence Community (IC) and federal law enforcement have been able to get their acts together to employ Title 100 in the Gray Zone. In some instances, they have leveraged Title 110 by employing SOF's Title 10 alongside the other authorities. Their successful orchestration has been of great benefit to each other, the President, the USG, and our ultimate stakeholders, the U.S. taxpayers. The partner nations have benefited greatly as well.

The three cases that come to mind most readily are the successful captures of three terrorists in Africa; two in North Africa and one in transit, off the coast of Somalia. In each instance, the USG, at times working closely with partner forces and governments, was able to mix and match its authorities to successfully find, track, and capture important terrorists. The first case was the capture of Ahmed Abdulkadir Warsame in international waters en route from Yemen to Somalia.[6] The second was the capture of Abu Anas al-Libi in Libya.[7] The third was the capture of Ahmed Abu Khatallah, also in Libya.[8] In these examples, each target was a terrorist who fit within the parameters of the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). At different stages of each operation, the IC, SOF, the Department of State (DOS), and the FBI each played key, leading roles. But in none of these cases was the end result a SOF kill, or any agency's kill, for that matter. For each case, the end state was a prosecution in U.S. Federal Court, back in the United States. In the al-Libi case there was an outstanding indictment prior to the initiation of the operation; in the Warsame and Abu Khatallah cases, the suspects self-incriminated during questioning, after capture.

Although these successes were all against terrorist targets, the distributed and shifting roles within the country team, as different combinations brought various aspects of the combined authorities to bear, is what we should focus on. But first, a short review of a methodology that serves us extremely well for combating terrorism, but which I believe can (and must) be adapted for use against all manner of malign actors in the Gray Zone.

Catching Bad Guys with F3EAD

Over the past 15 years we have developed and refined a targeting methodology now known as F̲ind, F̲ix, F̲inish, E̲xploit, A̲nalyze, and D̲isseminate. Of course, this wordy compilation just screams to become an acronym. And, of course, the acronym-enamored DOD has obliged: F3EAD has entered our lexicon.

As a result of our experiences in Afghanistan, and Iraq, and smaller more discreet efforts elsewhere, many within the interagency counterterrorism community (and beyond) have become adroit at implementing this targeting cycle. The cycle itself stresses the requirement to blend USG authorities, particularly outside of war zones. I will argue that it should not remain principally a counterterrorism skill set, but instead, could be used to address all manner of threats in the Gray Zone. We can envisage ways to combat both state sponsored and nonstate actor malign, illegal, and often clandestine enterprises using the F3EAD methodology, in close cooperation with our partners.

"Find" refers to the initial geographical locating of the target. "Fix" is the more intimate and timely locating and tracking of the

target, designed to eventually enable the next step. "Finish" can come in two forms; capture or kill. The former is far preferable to the latter, since the next phase is greatly enabled by capture options, and directly feeds the last two steps. "Exploit" refers to both the individual captured and all of the documents, electronics, and materials that may be captured with him. "Analyze" is the task of assessing and cross referencing all of the captured information, and placing it in context with the rest of what is known about the targeted individual, group, network, movement, or enterprise. Finally, "Disseminate" refers to making the analysis and raw information available back to the user and intelligence communities, with the view toward enabling a return to Phase One—to reset the cycle forward to another "Find."

To clarify, let me illuminate each phase a bit. The essential concept is that each phase (and each scenario) will require a tailored blending of the complement of authorities, with interagency roles and responsibilities adjusting accordingly.

As we further dissect the targeting cycle, we can see that the Find phase relies heavily on the intelligence community. The IC will leverage all source collection and analysis to scope the problem and locate the target. Bringing the U.S. intelligence and, in some cases, law enforcement information together into a seamless, cohesive whole is the first step in this task. Working with the partner in such a way as to leverage its information on the same subject is the second step.

For the Fix phase, the blend of authorities may shift. Some combination of IC resources, often augmented with or enabled by SOF, needs to get closer to the target and begin a pattern of direct observation and collection, including through technical means, that enables the development of the "pattern of life" of the target. Understanding the details of how the target is living and moving on a daily—and in some instances, on an hourly basis—allows for further assessment of his or her vulnerabilities and establishes the parameters of the options for the Finish phase. Of course, during this phase, operational security is perhaps the essential consideration for U.S. and host nation forces as secrecy is required to achieve the requisite surprise.

For the Finish phase the blend of authorities and capabilities will likely shift again. Since the Finish usually moves from a clandestine collection and observation phase to a direct action raid for the capture of the target, the role for SOF will likely increase, while the assets of the Fix phase maintain "eyes on target." For the Finish, if the goal of the operation is capture and extradition to the Unites States for trial, then incorporating some Title 28 resources into the capture phase is advisable, in order to maintain a legally sufficient "chain of custody" of the individual and any assets seized during his or her capture. Keeping the Title 28 players in the mix for movement back to the United States is also crucial to ensuring that no missteps occur along the way that might give defense attorneys an opening to sew doubt during any eventual trial.

The Exploitation phase usually involves most of the Title 100 (and Title 10) team, often dependent on language skills, technical expertise, an understanding of how this target fits into the rest of the malign organization, and the requirement to ensure proper chain of custody for those informational components crucial to a successful prosecution. Depending on the skills of the partner forces, they may also be extensively involved.

Analysis is definitely a broad effort, with some being done in the field by the Title 100 team on site, but much of it being done downstream by headquarters intelligence analysis staffs back at the various agency home offices. This phase of the effort may go on for months or years, depending on the scope and content of the sensitive information and equipment collected. If the partner has an analytic capacity, it may be fully engaged during this effort.

Finally, the Disseminate phase is also a broad effort. The initial outputs will come from the team in the field, but reports from the various intelligence and headquarters staffs involved may continue to publish finished intelligence long after the close of the operation. Again, heavy partner and international cooperation can be expected.

The key takeaway is that a skilled orchestration of the authorities and capabilities of the diplomatic, intelligence, military, and law enforcement tools resulted in impressive results against illegal, clandestine, dangerous Gray Zone targets. I contend that the same can be done against non-terrorist elements as well. It will just take a little more Special Operations "magic dust."

A DIME is Not Enough

For Gray Zone threats there are a few other core considerations that should go into our recipe for success. First, the traditional diplomatic, informational, military, and economic description of the elements of national power (known as DIME) is too narrow. At a minimum we should expand our toolkit to include financial, intelligence, and law enforcement (FIL) capabilities. If we combine these two, we have the somewhat cumbersome acronym of DIMEFIL.

A few years ago, I was frustrated with this acronym, and asked one of my action officers to develop a less clumsy and more easily remembered term. He was a typical SOF Major, in the middle of a divorce and attempting to stay alive in the expensive Washington environment. He was back in 20 minutes with a new phrase: MIDLIFE. This has the advantage, and disadvantage at the same time, of listing the Military tool first—making it easier for DOD types to remember, but upsetting the diplomats and associated DIME traditionalists.

Its real disadvantage is that it can imply that these Gray Zone malign actors can be best confronted by military means—a perception to be absolutely avoided at all costs. Nevertheless, I prefer MIDLIFE to DIMEFIL and enjoy seeing MIDLIFE appear in national security papers or talks from time to time.

The Environment is VUCA, at the Very Least

In addition to MIDLIFE, there is another War College acronym that is helpful to keep in mind as we asses this fog-filled Gray Zone environment. Many contend that the national security environment of today and tomorrow is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. This gives us VUCA, with each of these characteristics playing off of the others to make assessment of a given situation more difficult, and placing decisionmakers in a space where it is becoming more the norm that a decision must be taken, absent all (or even most) of the information that the decisionmaker would like to have before deciding.

Recently, a senior leader speaking at the National Defense University, referred to this phenomenon by saying that the only way to cope is to "become comfortable with being uncomfortable."[9] Given Gray Zone opponents'

inclination to leverage unexpected capabilities and to see asymmetric advantage where we see status quo, VUCA thinking should definitely permeate our approach.

So, an appreciation of the VUCA environment and a well-developed set of MIDLIFE tools are additional core requirements as we prepare to go beyond combating terrorism with our interagency Title 100 or Title 110 enterprise. But, there is another major challenge for the special operator deploying to a "peacetime" embassy.

You are not in Charge? So What. You can Still Make it Work.

The warrior diplomat, deployed to an embassy, will find himself (or herself) in an environment in which he has minimal authority, even over his own team. He certainly has no authority over the interagency group he is trying to influence; thus his task is to try to achieve unity of effort in the absence of unity of command. His first step is to scan the internal and external environments to determine the formal and (more importantly) informal power structures present in the country team. Who has access to whom? And who are the trusted (and despised) players in the zoo? Who actually makes the decisions and controls the game? Does anyone already understand Title 100, or Title 110? Can you partner with them?

As a SOF guy or gal you will need every ounce of your warrior diplomat skill set—to interact with the country team, before you ever get to say "Hi!" to a partner nation leader. You thought you were deploying to be a warfighter? Think again! Your real mission is to read and assess, to coopt and cajole, and generally curry favor with your embassy teammates to build a consensus about the Gray Zone and how to proceed therein.

Understanding that your most important role is to develop and nurture key relationships with the other interagency players on the country team is essential. Your task is to build a Title 110 cabal in their midst, where you are not in charge, but where you do have a major shaping voice in the way forward. Your goal is to have the ambassador (or his trusted agent) come to believe that this team, and the processes it will use, was his (or her) own brilliant idea.

This is political and informational warfare at the grass roots level. You have the necessary skills, but this work will require you to refocus them in an unending effort to build "coalitions of the willing and the able" to advance your agenda in the face of constant risk aversion, naysaying, and bureaucratic push back. Indirectly influencing those who you do not command, (and over whom you have but limited sway) should appeal to your core competencies as SOF. After all, for you Green Berets, when you first met your Robin Sage Guerilla Chief, you were in the same boat.[10]

Heretofore, you have lived (and thrived) in a relative meritocracy—work hard, be skilled, keep your eyes open and your mouth shut, be the best, play fair, and the "system" will reward you with prestige, promotions, and increased responsibilities. When you move into the interagency authorities game, you will leave the meritocracy and enter the "politocracy"—where your merit remains important, but will be neither adequate nor determinant.

Your political skills—including the ability to listen (not to respond quickly, but to actually understand), to know and cope with the cultures of the other agencies, and to mask your anger and frustration in pursuit of consensus—will be key to your success. Most of your gains will come by negotiating, not

directing. In those negotiations, you will often be a junior partner, or a bit player. In this environment, it is all about building and maintaining your credibility as a reliable and self-effacing player. You will need to check your ego (and, in all likelihood, your weapons) at the door, and recognize that the special operations culture from which you come is all too often viewed with skepticism and suspicion, rather than the awe and deference you have come to believe it deserves.

You will be working to shape decisions which you can't direct. This requires a soft touch and finesse, high emotional intelligence, excellent body language reading skills, and an ability to create trust and good will at a table where you usually have been dealt a pretty weak hand in terms of the actual resources you can offer, and the power of your position. But let's be positive and assume that you have built a consensus for action in the Embassy and that the country team is prepared to orchestrate the use of each other's authorities and resources to go after Gray Zone bad guys. You will have mastered the orchestration of Title 100, added Title 10 to the mix, and built your skills in the "politocracy" of the U.S. Government.

How can we use Title 100 Against Bad Guys who are not Terrorists?

Let's consider how we can leverage this process to go after Gray Zone threats (other than AUMF-able terrorists) that threaten partner nations. The concept is to employ the partner's equivalent of Title 100—in other words, guide the partner to orchestrate its own authorities. Although many of our partners talk a good "whole of government" game, when it comes

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Special Operations Forces and civilian and military leaders from the United States and European and African nations meet to discuss military cooperation, an example of Title 200 authority.

to operationalizing their authorities, they face many of the same challenges that we do. Among these are jealousies about prestige and resources, divided authorities within their constitution or political landscape, and preferences of the political leadership. Additionally, there are often tribal or family alignments along agency lines, regional divisions, and other unhelpful groupings within military, police, security, intelligence, and other security organizations. Finally, graft and corruption may undermine government competence and legitimacy across the board.

Scanning the partner's authorities as well as the assignment of roles and missions across its interagency landscape is essential to understanding what is within the realm of the possible. This review will also help guide our capacity- and capability-building efforts, and will enable us to guide the partner in use of its own "Title 100." The combination of our "100" plus the partner's "100" gives us the Title 200 concept.

Title 200? I was Still Struggling with 100.

To leverage Title 200, the SOF element, in cooperation with its USG partners, must develop an in-depth understanding of the distribution of authorities across the partner's intergovernmental bureaucratic and legal structures. Once this understanding has been mapped and assessed, the USG interagency team can help the partner—element by element, and in combinations—to apply the F3EAD targeting process to the malign actors threatening the partner's sovereignty.

Right off the bat, you can see this will clearly require a deep understanding of both the threats the partner faces, and the legal code under which it operates. Of course,

accomplishing this will take time, access, and expertise—bound together with excellent bilateral trust between the USG and the partner ministries and institutions. In addition, an in-depth assessment of the partner nation's legal framework and specific codes will be required so as to assess what enemy actions are already illegal, and which could be made illegal.

By employing Title 200, we may be able to overcome many of the constraints that limit our ability to act directly on our own against Gray Zone non-terrorist threats. We must recognize that in most cases, these threats will not rise to a level where the United States has the legal authorities to intercede, much less invoke war fighting authorities.

It is also true that in the majority of state actor cases, the United States will have a wide array of competing interests with that state sponsor. Many of these will be of greater strategic importance to the overall relationship than the hard to prove, non-attributable nasty games the sponsor is conducting against the partner in the Gray Zone. In such cases, gaining Washington's approval for a direct U.S. response is highly unlikely.

However, there is a good possibility that some aspect of the malign Gray Zone actor's activities will constitute a local crime. Thus, they could be arrested by host nation security or law enforcement authorities, imprisoned, and tried for these offenses. On the other hand, there will be cases for which the partner may also lack the authorities necessary to interdict the Gray Zone malign activities. In this event, the advisors should recommend subtle, but important enabling legal changes that will criminalize the actions of the Gray Zone threat actors, without undermining basic civil protections and human rights.

Gray Zone malign activities executed by enemy state or nonstate actors can create great instability, political or economic turmoil, paramilitary or inter-tribal violence, or other direct and indirect pressures which seek to undermine the credibility, legitimacy, and ability of the partner nation to govern.

When the malign conduct does not constitute a crime in the partner's existing legal framework, I recommend that the Legatt (and, when necessary, Department of Justice experts) review the legal code of the host nation and carefully advise host nation officials on how to criminalize key aspects of the malign actor's conduct. Through this process, the host nation law enforcement apparatus can then arrest the malign actors for their criminal activity—and curtail their Gray Zone actions.

In some cases, the criminal activity may not rise to the level of a national security threat. For these, we might recommend to the partner that they take a page from the U.S. experience dealing with the mafia and other organized crime syndicates. Partner law enforcement can charge the bad actors with lesser crimes, much like the actions many U.S. jurisdictions have taken to prosecute organized crime enterprises by initially charging crime bosses with "no visible means of support," then "discovering" their huge tax evasion schemes, and finally convicting them of tax evasion and/or tax fraud, as was the case with Al Capone.[11]

This indirect approach in many instances has added benefits. It may outflank the political support or protection that the criminal organization may have built within the host nation's governmental structure, or key leadership. It also avoids the challenges of trying to prove a more complex or serious set of criminal activities.

Using the local law enforcement approach has many advantages. First, many of the Title 100 agencies in the Embassy have training and equipping capacity-building authorities that can be used to strengthen both the host nation unit's capabilities, as well as its backbone. Next as we employ the F3EAD model, we can share intelligence and law enforcement information to help the partner with the Find and the Fix stages. Employing various "advise and assist" authorities, USG Title 100 players can frame, shape, and guide the partner's Finish operation. After the Finish, the partner and the United States can leverage the "take" from the target, including his records and electronic media, to close out the cycle with joint Exploitation, Analysis, and Dissemination.

A second advantage of this approach is that it empowers the partner to re-establish governance on his own territory, using his own authorities. If the United States were conducting these operations in lieu of the partner, the partner government would be open to charges from Gray Zone (and other) opponents that the government is incapable of governing, has sold out to the Americans, and therefore is illegitimate and unworthy of popular support.

However, none of these accusations apply when the partner is enforcing its own laws, on its own territory, with its own forces. In fact, its legitimacy is likely to increase as a result of its directly confronting the enemy shadow forces. Its population may, in fact, applaud government efforts to rid them of the nefarious malign actor pressure.

In these endeavors, as in many others with partners, we would be wise to heed the following words from T.E. Lawrence: "Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it

perfectly. It is their war, and you are here to help them, not to win it for them."[12]

So, help the partner understand the threat and develop the wherewithal to confront it on its own terms. Effectively leveraging the partner's authorities (and our own) to ensnare and prosecute Gray Zone criminals is core work for 21st century SOF.

In many ways, we should consider this the new approach to Foreign Internal Defense (FID). Whereas the original FID doctrine was developed to confront Soviet encroachment on partner sovereignty, we may be able to reformat the concept and employ the orchestrated authorities of Titles "100" and "200" to address the threats Gray Zone enemies present to our partners today.

The bottom line is please stop whining about inadequate authorities and start schmoozing our interagency and international partners to better leverage the authorities we do have. It is all about building relationships. You will need to build consensus inside the USG country team, and with host nation partner agencies. If you can bring your team (and your authorities) together with their team (and their authorities) into a cohesive and coherent whole of government campaign, you (and more importantly they) can go after Gray Zone threats with persistence and vigor.

The first step is to increase costs to Gray Zone adversaries and their sponsors by arresting key actors and successfully prosecuting them. Secondly, holding a public trial will expose both the criminals and their state sponsors to the light of international scrutiny and broad condemnation. At trial, some of the arrested operatives will incriminate their state sponsor bosses, particularly when they seek lesser penalties during sentencing. Additionally, some of the testimony may

permit charges against sponsoring government officials, either in national or international venues such as the International Criminal Court.

Finally, such an approach strengthens the partner nation's legitimacy by enabling it to demonstrate to its population, and to the world, that it is capable of coherent action in defense of its nation, even when the enemy is hiding his operations in the shadows of the Gray Zone.

Because of the United States' conventional (and nuclear) military overmatch against any near peer competitor for the foreseeable future it is likely that state competitors will continue to employ and refine their non-attributable Gray Zone capabilities for the next several decades. Malign nonstate actor enterprises will do the same. So far, democratic governments and their partners have not found good countermeasures to these illegal, clandestine methods that undercut legitimacy and create opportunities for their sponsors, while avoiding the imposition of costs that would likely be instituted, were the sponsoring government to attempt to conduct the same activity overtly.

This article describes some initial actions that could be taken today by the United States and our allies and partners to start imposing costs against a variety of malign actors exploiting Gray Zone shadows and ambiguity to their advantage. I have argued that we can make our current authorities work, despite the various challenges that our interagency processes and funding mechanisms present.

Nevertheless, I encourage the U.S. national security community to continue to pursue new, more flexible authorities at the same time. We need more flexible authorities and funding mechanisms to defeat Gray Zone threats. The measures I recommend in this

article allow us to accomplish some of what is needed today. However, as enemy actors evolve further, and hone their Gray Zone doctrines, our interagency national security mechanisms will continue to require longer term, flexible, and rapidly adaptable authorities and capabilities. PRISM

Notes

1 Title 10 of the U.S. Code establishes the authorities of the Department of Defense, outlining the role, mission, and organizational structure of the U.S. military under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense. Title 10 is organized into five subtitles, which include provisions on force structure, personnel, training, education, service, supply, and procurement.

2 Title 50 of the U.S. Code outlines the procedures governing "War and National Defense," describing how the United States declares and conducts war. Within its 43 chapters, Title 50 discusses intelligence operations, espionage, military equipment and assets, emergency powers, and other defense-related issues. Title 50 is primarily known for the powers it confers to the Intelligence Community through the Director of National Intelligence.

3 In covert missions and special operations, there is continuous conflict between Title 10 (the Department of Defense) and Title 50 (the Intelligence Community). For more information on the debate between Title 10 and Title 50, see: Andru E. Wall, "Demystifying the Title 10-Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities & Covert Action," 2011, < http://www.soc.mil/528th/PDFs/Title10Title50.pdf>.

4 United States Code: Title 22, Section 4865, *Security Requirements for the United States diplomatic facilities*, <http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:22%20section:4865%20edition:prelim)>.

5 Title 28 of the U.S. Code establishes the authorities of the Department of Justice (including the FBI) and outlines the organization of the courts, the procedures of the U.S. legal system, and the responsibilities of court officers and employees.

6 Karen DeYoung, Greg Miller, and Greg Jaffe, "U.S. indicts Somali on terrorism charges," *Washington Post*, July 5, 2011, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/national-security/us-indicts-somali-on-terrorism-charges/2011/07/05/gHQA-8bbfzH_story.html>.

7 Ernesto Londoño, "Alleged al-Qaeda operative captured in Libya was among terrorist organization's early elite," *Washington Post*, October 7, 2013, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/alleged-al-qaeda-operative-captured-in-libya-was-

among-terrorist-organizations-early-
elite/2013/10/07/386340dc-
2f83-11e3-8906-3daa2bcde110_story.html>.

[8]   In a press release, President Obama stated,
"The fact that he [Ahmed Abu Khatallah] is now in
U.S. custody is a testament to the painstaking efforts
of our military, law enforcement, and intelligence
personnel." This statement is a testament to the
effectiveness of interagency cooperation. For the full
text, see: "Statement by the President on the
Apprehension of Ahmed Abu Khatallah," The White
House, June 17, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/
the-press-office/2014/06/17/statement-president-
apprehension-ahmed-abu-khatallah>.

[9]   General officer speaking not for attribution at
the National Defense University in January 2016.

[10]   Robin Sage is the end of course exercise for
Green Berets that focuses on unconventional warfare.
During the exercise, the Green Berets meet with a
"local guerilla chief" who usually asks them some-
thing along the lines of, "Why don't I just kill you and
your team, and take your guns and money now?"

[11]   A document released by the FBI stated, "In
the end, it took a team of federal, state, and local
authorities to end Capone's reign as underworld boss.
Precisely the kind of partnerships that are needed
today as well to defeat dangerous criminals and
terrorists." For the full document, see: "How the Law
Finally Caught Up With Al Capone," Federal Bureau
of Investigation, March, 28, 2005, <https://archives.
fbi.gov/archives/news/stories/2005/march/
capone_032805>.

[12]   T.E. Lawrence, "The Evolution of A Revolt,"
Combat Studies Institute, reproduced on December 4,
2000, available at <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/
carl/download/csipubs/lawrence.pdf>.

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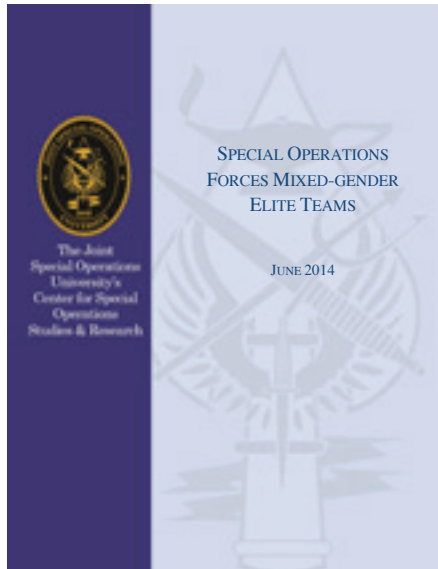
Special Operations Forces Mixed-Gender Elite Teams
by William Knarr, Jessica Glicken Turnley, Dona J. Stewart, Rich Rubright, and Jason Quirin

On 24 January 2013, the US secretary of defense (SecDef) rescinded the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DCAR), which excluded women from assignment to units and positions whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground. In doing so, the SecDef directed the opening of all occupational specialties, positions, and units to women; the validation of gender-neutral standards for those positions; and the establishment of milestones for implementation. In a March 2013 memorandum, the Commander USSOCOM directed several initiatives as a result of the SecDef's DCAR rescission. While other studies examined individual performance and standards, the JSOU Center for Special Operations Studies and Research examined the effects of these changes on team dynamics. The challenge for this study was to determine whether changing the gender component of special operations forces elite teams from single-gender (masculine) to mixed-gender would affect team dynamics in a way that would compromise the ability of the team to meet a mission objective.

Improving the Sustainment of SOF Distributed Operations in Access-Denied Environments
by Robert Haddick

In this monograph, Robert Haddick examines a variety of emerging technologies and techniques that could improve the sustainment and effectiveness of distributed SOF operations, especially in access-denied environments. He begins by presenting a challenging yet plausible notional unconventional warfare campaign scenario. He describes how current SOF planners would attempt to cope with this scenario under current doctrine and sustainment capabilities, and explores current and emerging technologies that could provide new options and capabilities. Finally, he evaluates new technologies that promise to reduce logistic demand for distributed SOF operations. Haddick proposes research and development projects that would provide SOF with capabilities that improve their capacity to execute clandestine UW campaigns in denied areas. This monograph helps close the gap between current conditions and what will be necessary in an access-denied future.

At a base in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan, a special forces commander meets with members of the Afghan National Army Corps and village elders to discuss military plans in the Sangin District.

The Limits of Special Operations Forces

BY AUSTIN LONG

I n the early 1980s, the future of U.S. special operations forces (SOF) looked decidedly grim. The Vietnam-era boom in SOF had long since expired and the 1970s ended with the debacle of the attempted SOF-led rescue of U.S. hostages in Iran. After two decades of rebuilding, SOF were much more capable on the eve of the September 11, 2001 attacks, but were still only used sparingly and in the shadows.[1]

Now, nearly two more decades later, the SOF pendulum has fully swung in the opposite direction of the nadir of the early 1980s. SOF are routinely deployed in a variety of missions globally, from direct action missions against terrorists to training and advising both conventional and unconventional allied forces (often termed the "indirect approach"). The U.S. SOF community has expanded greatly in both size and missions and has become, along with remotely piloted aircraft (aka drones), the weapon of choice for small footprint counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations as well as the projection of discrete and discriminate force.[2]

Yet, despite the current enthusiasm, special operations are not a panacea for all security challenges. Policymakers and analysts must remain cognizant of the limits of SOF while developing military strategy lest too much be asked of the force. This is particularly important as the security environment changes—a SOF-centric strategy might be appropriate for some challenges but inappropriate for others.

This article describes the limits of SOF and proceeds in four parts. The first describes some limitations common to all special operations. The second describes limitations on the direct approach for the employment of SOF (e.g. direct action and special reconnaissance), while the third describes limitations on the indirect approach (e.g. unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense). It concludes with recommendations to policymakers.

It is worth noting upfront that while this article will necessarily focus on the shortcomings of special operations it is not intended to denigrate the importance of special operations or SOF.

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Instead, it should be read as an attempt to manage expectations for the force so it can be employed effectively and efficiently. While it is currently unimaginable that SOF could return to something like the dark days of the early 1980s, it is equally important to remember that the current prominence of SOF was equally unimaginable then. Remaining cognizant of the limits of SOF is crucial to preventing overreliance on the force, which could in turn lead to a significant reduction in willingness to support or employ SOF.

General Limitations of Special Operations

All special operations share some common limitations, the first being that special operations (and by extension SOF) almost never achieve decisive strategic success on their own. Special operations and SOF alone can often only achieve decisive tactical success. Occasionally, special operations can have some strategic effect on their own, particularly in terms of signaling commitment and capability through discrete operations. But absent other supporting elements—whether military, diplomatic, or economic—the achievement of decisive strategic effects by SOF is very rare.

For example, one of the most daring direct action missions of World War II was the German seizure of the massive Belgian fortress of Eben Emael in May 1940. Yet the German elite paratroopers' capture of the fortress and nearby bridges would have been only a tactical success without prompt link-up with the advancing 18th Army. By linking up quickly with the 18th Army, the rapid capture of the fort enabled German conventional forces to cross into Belgium before British units could reinforce Belgian defenses, a key element of Allied plans. A well-orchestrated combination of special and conventional operations thus allowed a decisive tactical success to have a decisive strategic effect as well.[3]

In contrast, the British effort to seize the bridge at Arnhem during Operation *Market Garden* (the so-called "bridge too far") was ineffective despite employment of a much larger force of paratroopers. While the intent of the operation was similar to that of Eben Emael, the British XXX Corps was unable to advance to Arnhem, leaving the British paratroopers stranded and eventually overrun. Without effective support from conventional forces, what should have been a tactical special operations success became a rout.[4]

The Israeli raid on Green Island in July 1969 further underscores the importance of orchestrating elements of national power to enable SOF success to achieve strategic effect. Green Island was home to important Egyptian intelligence and early warning installations during the war of attrition between Israel and Egypt. While the island could have been attacked using conventional means, Israeli command decided to use SOF to demonstrate Egyptian vulnerabilities, even in highly fortified positions.

The Israeli raid was a tactical success, despite the high number of Israeli casualties. By following up the raid with airstrikes exploiting the newly created gap in Egyptian air defense as well as diplomatic messaging, the Israelis ensured the raid's success contributed significantly to the strategic objective of ending the war. Absent this support, the raid might even have been viewed as a strategic failure, given the amount of Israeli casualties.[5]

The raid that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden by U.S. SOF in 2011 had a strategic effect in the sense that it was viewed as bringing some level of closure to the September 11,

2001 attacks. Like the raid on Green Island, it demonstrated to current and potential adversaries the capability of U.S. special operations forces.[6] Yet this strategic effect was far from decisive, either in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region or in the global war on terror. The Israeli raid on Entebbe, Uganda, was similar in demonstrating the long reach of Israeli SOF, while also rescuing hostages that would otherwise have been a strategic bargaining chip for terrorists.[7]

This limitation is not just applicable to the direct approach. British SOF were remarkably successful in helping Oman decisively defeat an insurgency in the province of Dhofar in the 1970s. However, SOF tactical success in leading and advising Omani units was aided by diplomatic efforts, which brought Iranian troops and support in to the conflict on the side of Oman. British intelligence launched a parallel effort to build and advise Oman's intelligence service. British advisers also helped Oman craft an economic policy to make the most of its valuable, but limited oil reserves. Absent this multidimensional support (and as noted below, Omani willingness to reform) the SOF tactical success would have been unlikely to produce such a decisive strategic victory.[8]

The U.S. SOF mission in El Salvador in the 1980s was likewise enabled by extensive whole of government support. Economic assistance and advice helped sustain an economy battered by war while the U.S. intelligence community provided important support in a variety of ways, including covert action. The U.S. Ambassador was particularly crucial, as U.S. support to El Salvador was controversial, and

Brian Harrington

British vehicles parked in a wadi in Oman during the Dhofar Rebellion, an example of successful cooperation with local forces.

absent deft management could have been suspended entirely.[9]

In stark contrast, recent SOF tactical successes were not well supported in either direct or indirect action in Yemen against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Tactical successes did not yield strategic success as the government of Yemen collapsed into civil war, creating an opportunity for AQAP to fill the void created as U.S. SOF withdrew from the country.[10] It remains to be seen if the Saudi-led coalition, which relies heavily on SOF, will have greater strategic success than its predecessor.[11]

The second common limit of SOF is the inherent high-risk nature of special operations. While this risk can be managed, it cannot be eliminated. This risk is only of moderate importance when policymakers are heavily committed to achieving an outcome such as victory in a major war. Yet policymakers often turn to SOF when seeking a limited liability military option—one just short of major war or intervention. In such situations, policymaker commitment to the objective may be sufficient to deploy SOF, but insufficient to sustain that deployment after a negative event occurs as a result of required risk taking.

This environment produces a paradox, which limits SOF. If SOF are to continue being deployed in this environment, policymakers must either eschew necessary risk taking or assume risk, knowing a sufficiently negative incident could end the deployment. The former choice means operations will be suboptimally effective, while the latter choice means a single negative event could end an entire SOF campaign (often with severe consequences for SOF careers).

The events in Mogadishu, Somalia, in the fall of 1993 highlight this paradox. Task Force Ranger had been committed precisely to achieve U.S. objectives without employing a major military force. In conducting operations against Mohammed Farah Aidid and his militia forces, the task force commander, Major General William Garrison, assumed risk by necessity. A series of missions culminated in the events of 3-4 October, when an operation to capture senior supporters of Aidid encountered much greater resistance than anticipated. Despite an effective withdrawal by Major General Garrison against a vastly larger force, the operation still resulted in substantial and highly publicized American casualties. The task force was completely withdrawn soon after and Major General Garrison's career, exemplary to that point by all accounts, was effectively ended.[12]

Conversely, many indirect approach missions are sub-optimally effective as SOF are prohibited or discouraged from taking risk. After 1969, military advisors to the CIA-sponsored Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) program in Vietnam, one of the only effective indigenous direct action capabilities, were no longer allowed to accompany the PRUs on missions. This restriction was not only imposed because of the physical risk to advisors, but also because of the political risk to individuals in Washington. The latter was particularly important as the U.S. commitment to South Vietnam dwindled and allegations of U.S. and South Vietnamese war crimes grew after the events in My Lai. Keeping U.S. advisors at arm's length from an effective but ruthless military campaign (many PRU members were seeking revenge against the insurgency) became a political imperative. Unfortunately, the resultant negative impact on PRU morale and effectiveness was substantial.[13]

Similar restrictions were imposed on the U.S. military advisory group in El Salvador in the 1980s. Paradoxically, by limiting U.S. advisor participation in combat operations to limit political risk, it became very difficult to disprove allegations of human rights abuses by the Salvadoran military. Reducing risk thus limited the potential effectiveness of Salvadoran operations from both a military and political perspective.[14]

Limits on SOF in the Direct Approach

Beyond these general limitations, SOF face specific challenges when used in the direct approach (direct action and special reconnaissance). The first is related to one of the major applications of U.S. and allied SOF in the 21st century—the targeting of insurgent and terrorist leadership. The theory behind such "high value targeting" operations is that the loss of leaders will lead to the collapse or at least the serious degradation of the terrorist or insurgent leadership structure.

However, the effects of targeting leadership appear to vary widely and are highly dependent on the characteristics of the organization. Some organizations are highly dependent on a single charismatic leader or a handful of skilled organizers to provide organizational direction and cohesion. Others are much more institutionalized, with regularized procedures for replacing lost leaders—the latter being a common problem for any combat organization, whether insurgency or army.

For example, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) of Peru was highly dependent on its founder and leader Abimael Guzman (aka Comrade Gonzalo). After organizing in the 1970s, Sendero Luminoso began a successful (and brutal) guerrilla campaign in the 1980s—at one point controlling much of south and central Peru. Yet following Guzman's capture in 1992, the organization began to splinter, a process accelerated by the capture of a handful of other key leaders, including Guzman's eventual replacement in 1999. Subsequent loss of leadership in the 2000s further weakened the organization. While the loss of leadership was not the only factor contributing to Sendero Luminoso's decline and near total defeat, it is clear the capture or killing of a small number of leaders by SOF (in this case from Peru's elite counterterrorism police unit) had a very large impact.[15]

In contrast, the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, the supreme leader of the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Worker's Party or PKK), had only a modest effect on the survival of the organization. Ocalan's capture by Turkish SOF in Kenya did lead to a temporary PKK cease-fire with the government. However, unlike Sendero Luminoso, the PKK did not begin to lose cohesion after the capture of its supreme leader and has renewed its rebellion against the Turkish state on two occasions (roughly 2004-2012 and 2015 to present).[16]

Beyond targeting specific senior leaders, SOF can also be employed in a more comprehensive campaign against both senior and mid-level leaders and technical experts (such as bomb makers or financiers). Such campaigns are intended to remove key figures at all levels, eventually disrupting the organization by eliminating these individuals faster than they can be replaced. Such campaigns require substantially more resources, both in terms of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets, as well as units to take action against the targets.

The U.S. and allied SOF campaigns against insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, including al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the Taliban in

Afghanistan are examples of these sustained and well-resourced high value targeting campaigns. In both cases, these campaigns have been remarkably successful at the tactical and operational level. Beginning with founder Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the senior leaders of AQI have been killed on a number of occasions, with a replacement emerging each time.[17]

In Afghanistan, the coalition realized even greater tactical success against mid-level leaders. As journalist Graeme Smith notes:

A Canadian military intelligence officer looked back at his tour of duty [in Afghanistan] with satisfaction in the spring of 2008, believing that nearly all the middle ranks of the local insurgency had been killed or captured during his nine months in Kandahar. The elimination of those field commanders, he calculated,

would leave the insurgents with little remaining capacity for the summer fighting season.[18]

Similarly, operations against AQI were sustained at a high level. This was enabled by the massing of intelligence and surveillance assets under a SOF task force, which then was resourced to undertake multiple actions per night.[19] As a report from the Joint Special Operations University notes, "Between 2006 and 2009 the task force maintained an operational tempo of 300 raids a month against AQI's networks in Iraq…"[20]

The impact of these sustained tactical and operational successes were, however, decidedly mixed. Against some insurgent organizations these campaigns had significant effect. The Fallujah Shura Council in Iraq was a powerful insurgent umbrella organization in the early

SPC Eli J. Medellin, U.S. Army

A car bomb set off by al-Qaeda in Iraq, an organization that is highly resilient to special forces high-value targeting campaigns.

days of the war. However, it soon disintegrated following the loss of its key leader, Abdullah Janabi, and several mid-level commanders in 2004.[21]

In contrast, AQI and the Taliban were able to survive and continue fighting on a significant scale despite massive loss of leaders. As Graeme Smith recounts of the Canadian military intelligence officer's claim that the Taliban would have little fight left in Kandahar:

> *Sadly, he was proved wrong: the summer of 2008 was the deadliest period Kandahar has witnessed during the latest war. It could be argued that the violence might have been worse if certain Taliban commanders had not been killed, but so far attacks on insurgent commanders have shown no signs of weakening the insurgency.[22]*

Similarly, despite over 1,000 raids against AQI leadership in three years, along with a surge of U.S. conventional forces and the Sunni Awakening against AQI, in 2010 AQI was weakened but by no means crippled. Despite this weakening it was still able to launch multiple daily attacks across Iraq in January 2011;[23] and in March 2011, it was able to temporarily seize the provincial government buildings in Tikrit.[24]

Five years later, AQI's descendent, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), has seized substantial territory in Iraq and Syria. Though it is being degraded by a sustained air and military campaign, including SOF action against its leaders, it shows remarkable resilience as of this writing. Indeed, ISIL has been able to extend footholds into other countries, most notably Libya.[25]

The central limitation on these SOF campaigns is the nature of the adversary. AQI/ISIL

and the Taliban are much more institutionalized organizations than Sendero Luminoso or the Fallujah Shura Council. Despite suffering massive leadership losses and tactical and operational setbacks, both organizations have remained coherent and combat effective.

SOF reconnaissance operations for targeting also face similar limitations. In 2001, SOF targeting support linked U.S. airpower to the indigenous ground forces of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. The result was devastating to the Taliban and its al-Qaeda allies.[26]

SOF reconnaissance linked to air power against North Vietnamese logistics in Laos produced a much less significant strategic effect. As part of a comprehensive campaign against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, SOF units conducted special reconnaissance missions to find and target U.S. airpower against trucks transporting material down the trail. This was supplemented by SOF units placing sabotaged ammunition in insurgent caches they discovered. Yet despite tactical and operational success against logistics, the supply of material into South Vietnam was not strategically disrupted.[27]

As with direct action, the pivotal factor for SOF reconnaissance and airpower is the adversary. In 2001, many local Taliban abandoned the fight quickly, shocked by the efficacy of the U.S. and allied offensive.[28]

The North Vietnamese and their insurgent brothers were more able to adapt to U.S. airpower by distributing lessons learned and using deception and other means to neutralize SOF and airpower.[29] Crucially, the Vietnamese were able to maintain the will to fight despite massive losses through a combination of revolutionary ideology, social control mechanisms, and relentless self-criticism.[30]

Limits on SOF in the Direct Approach

Whatever its limitations, one major advantage of the direct approach to using SOF is control. Policymakers have high confidence that, when directed, U.S. SOF will execute missions as briefed. They will not shirk responsibilities nor seek to derive personal profit from operations in almost all cases.

The same cannot be said of many forces SOF support in the indirect approach, which is a major limitation. As Daniel Byman has described, U.S. interests often diverge wildly from the interests of local allies in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaigns.[31] SOF efforts to work "by, with, and through" indigenous allies are constrained by the need to manage these divergences in interest.

Typically, indigenous partners come in two varieties: proxies (sometimes called surrogates) and partners. Proxies are defined principally as sub-state actors (e.g. militias) having a direct relationship with the United States and only a limited (or non-existent) relationship with the nation where they operate. Partners in contrast are an element of an existing nation-state's security apparatus.

Proxies offer the advantage of greater possibility of aligning U.S. interests with those of the proxy. With loyalty principally to itself, the proxy force may be resolute and motivated as long as support from U.S. SOF is central to achieving the proxy's goals. Good pay, combined with the lack of viable alternatives to U.S. support, will typically produce very reliable and effective proxies.

Though reliable and effective, proxies are still not the equivalent of U.S. SOF (or even regular military forces in some cases). For example, U.S. and allied SOF, in conjunction with the CIA, supported a variety of proxy forces in Laos in the early 1960s. The proxies, in most cases drawn from ethnic minorities, had been neglected by the Laotian government

Taliban fighters lay down their weapons in a U.S.-sponsored reintegration program. The willingness of the enemy to keep fighting is a major factor in the success of a Special Forces operation.

and viewed U.S. support as their principal alternative to continuing neglect. With proper training and advising from SOF, these proxies were very effective within certain constraints. As CIA historian (and former case officer in Laos) Thomas Ahern notes:

> Whether firing a carbine or an M-l, nearly every Hmong volunteer needed only a few hours at the improvised firing range before the training team moved on to combat organization and tactics. The Hmong would not be mounting company or even platoon-size operations, at first, and [name redacted] trained them to operate in three-man fire teams. They immediately grasped the principle of fire-and-maneuver, in which one man or element fires from cover while the other advances, in a kind of leap-frog approach toward the enemy's position… A Pathet Lao unit of reported battalion strength moved to within 2 miles of the training base, and the Hmong irregulars went into action within a week of the first weapons drop. The guerrillas ambushed the advancing Pathet Lao, and in the two days of combat that followed killed a reported 17 enemy. Never to be renowned for their fire discipline, the Hmong exhausted their ammunition supply during this action…[32]

This anecdote highlights both the strength of such motivated proxies—conducting an effective ambush within a week of being given the first modern weapons they had ever seen—as well as the limits—lack of fire discipline. For the next decade the proxies in Laos would perform well in ambush and other guerilla roles while never becoming particularly good infantry. Ahern concludes, "Motivated almost exclusively by the urge to protect their families,

these irregulars, even with more training than time and resources allowed, would never be regular infantry capable of a frontal assault."[33]

Partnering with proxies also face another substantial limitation, which is that in many cases SOF must manage a complex relationship between the proxy and the host nation. As the Laos example shows, many proxies are motivated precisely because they have a poor relationship with their own government. Whether the Hmong in Laos, or the Kurds in Iraq and Syria, the most motivated and loyal proxies are frequently drawn from groups with complex or adversarial relationships with their own government.[34]

This reality means proxies and host nation governments can end up in conflict. This is allegedly what happened when the Kandahar Strike Force, a proxy, had a tense stand-off escalating into a gun battle with the Afghan police in 2009.[35] In South Vietnam, U.S. forces faced a similar problem with ethnic minority proxies and attempted to create a stronger relationship with the government by including South Vietnamese SOF in their programs. This worked to a point; then one proxy force mutinied and massacred its Vietnamese SOF advisers.[36]

If proxies are potentially better aligned with the United States at the cost of friction with the host nation, partner forces are the opposite. As part of the host nation government, they have clear authority to use force and collect intelligence without risking conflict with other parts of the host nation security force (in most cases). At the same time, the partner force is subject to all the frailties, divergent interests, and political problems of the host nation.

In rare instances, this is not a problem. The British SOF fighting insurgency in Oman

were fortunate in having the British educated Sultan Qaboos as a partner. After deposing his unenlightened father, Qaboos became the model of an enlightened despot, making reforms to both his security forces and the overall nature of government in his country based on advice from the British. The result was an enormously effective set of partners, ranging from the reformed regular armed forces of the Sultan to the irregular *firqat*, composed of defectors from the insurgency.[37]

Yet the example of Sultan Qaboos is as dramatically positive as it is rare. More typical is Iraq, where partner units for U.S. SOF were often subject to a variety of political limitations. General Nomon Dakhil, commander of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior's elite Emergency Response Brigade, was widely viewed by U.S. SOF as an outstanding partner. Yet when Dakhil became too aggressive in targeting Shia militia elements, he was arrested on corruption charges and his unit became substantially less effective.[38]

In addition to the inherent limitations of control, the other principal (and related) limitation of SOF in the indirect role is the need for patience to achieve results. Whether with proxy or partner forces, the time required to achieve strategic effects is often long. Even in the ideal case of Sultan Qaboos in Oman, success took five years—most efforts take much longer.

In a more typical case, U.S. and allied SOF began partnering with Colombian SOF in the 1990s. It took more than a decade for this indirect approach to achieve strategic effects, ultimately helping bring the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) insurgency to the edge of defeat and subsequent peace negotiations.[39] The SOF mission to the Philippines required 13 years to achieve significant strategic success.[40]

Conclusions

Patience and a willingness to tolerate a lack of control are not characteristics common to U.S. policymakers—unless they have no other choice. It is thus unsurprising that policymakers have preferred the direct approach in many instances since 2001. Yet the limitations of the direct approach, principally its requirement for a significant commitment in terms of both political and physical capital, have often required policymakers to accept the exigencies of the indirect approach.

As a result, policymakers have simultaneously embraced SOF and become frustrated by their limitations. As with covert action conducted by the CIA, presidents often become enamored and then disenchanted with SOF. The ability to create tactical and operational effects with limited commitment and liability often fails to yield sufficient strategic results.

The central insights for policymakers regarding SOF were well captured by Colin Gray just before the post-September 11 resurgence in SOF. He noted, "SOF need an educated consumer, political and military patrons who appreciate what SOF should, and should not, be asked to do… SOF need protection from the fantasies of political sponsors."[41] Without sufficiently educated policymakers, SOF, regardless of approach, will not be able to realistically achieve policymaker's goals.

Future policymakers should be cognizant of the limitations of both SOF approaches. For the direct approach, the strategic effects are likely to be limited without additional supporting efforts. Direct action against terrorist and insurgent leadership can achieve tactical and operational effects, buying space and time

for other efforts. But absent additional effort, direct action can only manage and limit strategic challenges, disrupting plots and degrading capabilities, not fully defeat them.

For the indirect approach, policymakers must cultivate the rare virtue of patience. This will often require trying to get problems off the front pages of the newspaper (or digital equivalent). SOF support in Oman, the Philippines, and Colombia benefited from the fact that there was little attention paid to those operations. In contrast, the high visibility of the war in Syria and the political limitations on support to Syrian rebels ensured that patience—and success—were both unlikely. **PRISM**

Notes

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A U.S. Army infantry officer trained in Arabic negotiates with Iraqi tribal leaders. Iraq's political landscape is particularly challenging in part due to tribal influences.

Regional Understanding and Unity of Effort

Applying the Global SOF Network in Future Operating Environments Communications

BY CHRISTOPHER VARHOLA

The convergence of popular wars, ethnic and religious conflict, ideological extremism, and competition over diminishing resources are "messy" scenarios that defy prescriptive solutions. Yet this messiness is what increasingly defines today's operating environment, requiring adaptive combinations of knowledge and action within a unified interagency framework. In this context, Special Operations Forces (SOF), to include Information Operations and Civil Affairs, plays an increasingly active and necessary role. To this end, "the global SOF network vision consists of a globally networked force of SOF, interagency allies and partners able to rapidly respond to, and persistently address, regional contingencies and threats to stability."[1] The success of both the conventional military and the global SOF network requires sustained regional expertise for success in future operating environments, as well as institutionalized relationships with interagency partners born from mutual respect, common interests, and a shared understanding of the operating environment. This article proposes an increased emphasis on understanding both the institutional and geo-cultural operating environments. In theory, this is nothing new, but in reality, it requires a shift in the ways we look at military education, senior leaders, and strategic expectations.

Overseas military operations in today's operating environment are frequently coordinated and conducted in U.S. embassies, each of which represents an interagency task force that seeks to gather information, promote development, empower allies, and disrupt terrorist networks

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through both direct and indirect activities. It is accepted that the U.S. military, to include SOF, needs to operate in joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environments, as well as in volatile, uncertain, and ambiguous (VUCA) situations. These concepts join the dustbin of hollow buzzwords, however, if they are not realized through institutionalized emphasis and mechanisms for operational application. It is not enough to say something is "complex." There must be efforts to understand the elements of that complexity. This is particularly the case with SOF, which must possess the dual capability of interacting with conventional counterparts and operating effectively out of U.S. embassies throughout the world. With this in mind, no matter how proficient SOF is in direct action, SOF will ultimately be unsuccessful without the participation of other entities, to include U.S. embassy country teams, Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), and in most cases, partner nations.

Interagency

Military success in dealing with other government agencies must go beyond tired clichés of different institutional cultures. Like any objectification of culture, there will exist certain simplistic elements of truth in such characterizations. Even where broad ends are compatible, different ways and means result in interagency approaches that may seem to favor some and marginalize others. However, interagency relations are obscured by a more complex reality in which geopolitical context, personality, and variable levels of experience and competence carry a heavy influence. While interagency accommodation and integration is incumbent on all agencies, some types of military activities, such as training of host

nation military forces contribute to the gradual transformation that the Department of State is often trying to promote. Other activities may be seen as undermining it.

State Department efforts at transformational diplomacy seek to change governments through a stimulation of civil society and democratic processes, not armed conflict.[2] Defense institution building (DIB) is an important element of these efforts. Here the military provides sought after expertise. The use of U.S. embassies as nodes in other than declared theaters of conflict (ODTAC), however, represents a new paradigm that is contrary to the traditional steady-state mission of the U.S. State Department (DOS), and can cause friction with foreign partner nations. In these situations, military forces must have authorities and a clear mission. Authorities give actions legitimacy and legal standing. Absent relevant authorities, interagency integration will be challenging regardless of the skills and preparation of military members. Even with clear authorities, uncertainty about how to accomplish mission sets without undesirable unintended consequences demands interagency effectiveness. This is not an intuitive process, but rather one that requires multiple institutional perspectives and the balancing of diplomatic risk in relation to military objectives.

A lack of authorities, competition, or lack of clarity between DOS and Department of Defense (DOD) results in predictable and avoidable entrenchment in perceived institutional imperatives. This is particularly the case for interagency dynamics at U.S. embassies, where the U.S. military risks a reputation for attempting to implement plans that do not take host nation government structures and long-term U.S. interests into account. Along these lines, polarized tension between DOD,

to include SOF, and chiefs of mission has been common in the last twenty years. It is common to hear DOD personnel talk of anti-military ambassadors, as well as State Department personnel talking of military personnel who create problems and then leave. Areas of contention include Chief of Mission versus Combatant Commander authorities concerning security and force protection requirements, reporting chains, and limiting DOD assets on where they can go, who they can interact with, and what they can do. This tension is good when based on clear understandings and honest communication; however, the tension is destructive and cyclical when based on inherited personality conflicts and dogmatic positions.

In this respect, success in JIIM needs to begin with recognizing, understanding, utilizing, and empowering the structures that are already in existence. Every country that has a U.S. embassy already has a functioning interagency structure in the form of a country team. A failure by DOD elements to understand its role and functions in turn undermines the interagency process. The Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché (SDO/DATT) represents DOD on the country team and provides a conduit for all other DOD elements, to include Special Operations Forces Liaison Elements (SOFLEs) and senior leaders. In theory, no DOD activity should be planned without close coordination with the SDO/DATT. Both at embassies and the GCCs, Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) are the lynchpin between SOF, the GCC, the host nation, and the country team. The simplistic antagonisms that sometimes exist between GCC staffs, the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC), and ambassadors are all too frequently a failure to adequately empower and understand the role

of the SDO/DATTs, who, more often than not, have the experience and knowledge of the operational context as well as knowledge of the multiple personalities involved. This places the burden on defense attachés to understand military campaign plans and embassy Integrated Country Strategies (ICS) and integrate these with the nuances and challenges inherent to distinct countries within the context of international and regional dynamics and implications. Choreographed meetings and rigid office calls do little to overcome interagency tensions. Rather, it takes sustained trust and confidence-building through regular and meaningful interactions.

For instance, a senior leader, staff officer, or operator who has inherited a mission set with little preparation or regional understanding will not be able to effectively "sell it" to an ambassador or country team, thus inviting time consuming micromanagement and oversight. In the same regard, operators who have had specialized training in various forms of tradecraft and informational skillsets cannot expect to be equally adept in multiple regions. This has proven problematic in the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) area of responsibility (AOR), where individuals fresh from the Middle East or Afghanistan are faced with entirely new institutional and social operating environments. This places them in an unequal role with interagency counterparts, with the added pressure to achieve results in a four, six, or nine month rotation, causing personal frustration and exacerbating interagency tension.

This is aggravated by unclear military command and control structures and the different operating approaches and mandates of different SOF elements and GCCs. If the U.S. military is unable to achieve internal unity of

effort, it is unrealistic to expect that military units and activities can be efficiently integrated into interagency dynamics. SOF activities often require the approval and support of both the U.S. ambassador and the host nation, which in turn requires that their activities be synchronized with both Theater Campaign Plans (TCPs) and embassy ICSs. Even for SOF elements operating outside of the TCP, coordination and synchronization of efforts within an interagency framework is still necessary. In both cases, SOF needs to bring regional expertise and credible plans that further the TCP and make it into a credible operational blueprint as opposed to a remote, wordy document with little real world application that does not reflect the richness of diverse operating environments.

Such richness can also be lost when complexity is reduced to "lines of effort" that utilize critical events and decisive points to reflect multifaceted and converging events. Whereas these are useful in mapping out a commander's intent, such approaches run the risk of portraying decontextualized and irrelevant indicators as opposed to a meaningful progression towards national security objectives. Military agreements between the U.S. and various African countries provide a case in point. In a recent example, a "partner nation" in Africa agreed to host an American military training team to conduct training on intelligence sharing and collection. However, three days before the event was scheduled to start, the host nation stated it would cancel the training if the Americans did not pay a particular caterer thousands of dollars to provide meals for the students. This presented a challenge in that the United States did not have the authorities to pay for subsistence. Creative interagency funding was nonetheless patched

together and the training was executed. The fact that the training was secondary to the bribe is a sound indicator that this did not reflect an advanced military to military relationship between the United States and this country. This, however, was lost on both senior U.S. military and State Department leadership, which both insisted that the training was too important to cancel.

On the contrary, this indicated the low esteem that the particular host nation placed on the training and on relations with the United States. As leadership and staff officers rotate out of embassies and AFRICOM, this training event nonetheless will likely be reduced to a historical data point inaccurately reflecting a growing and enhanced partnership. Rather, the event reflected the manner in which the United States was seen more as a source of revenue that could be manipulated, than as a strategic partner. Nevertheless, this was a "critical event" that needed to be accomplished to give the impression of close military to military relations and to accomplish the tasks associated with a particular line of effort.

In this regard, "one size fits all" approaches to multiple countries are inadequate. Even seemingly straightforward undertakings such as military assistance and training will differ significantly from country to country based on civil military relations and attitudes towards the U.S. The stark contrast between Kenya and Ethiopia provides an example.

The complexities become magnified for activities such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), which most often involve multiple zones of contention along ethnic, religious, political, and economic lines. Techniques that were successful in Liberia, for example, will not necessarily be

successful in larger heterogeneous conflicts such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. Similarly, techniques that garnered success ten years ago in a specific operating environment are unlikely to still be applicable. The better approach is to stress the lessons from previous experience (both successes and failures) in a manner that is tailored to the specificities of new and changing operating environments. While this may seem like a splitting of hairs, it is not. On the contrary, it reflects a level of maturity and capability that directly impacts the degree of autonomy that will be afforded by the country team and ambassador. Here the SDO/DATT must play the role of enabler and honest broker (and must be empowered to do so). Every country is unique and success rests on adapting existing means in a way that matches unique sociopolitical dynamics.

Moreover, in conflict, action bereft of regional understanding is more likely to have cascading negative results. Iraq and Afghanistan are cases in point, as is Somalia. In 1993, for example, the targeting of a meeting of elders from Mohammed Farah Aidid's Habr Gidr clan seemed logical from a simplistic link analysis point of view. However, some of the individuals killed in the strike were opposed to Aideed and were engaged in peace discussions with the United Nations.[3] The net result of the strike, rather than removing sources of instability, was to exacerbate and polarize the conflict between the United States and a broader Somali society as well as removing a social structure that could have contributed to a cessation of hostilities. In the wake of the chaos that followed, the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts contributed to some degree of stability, albeit one that mixed grassroots support with links to international terrorism. Yet the removal of the Union of Islamic Courts by Ethiopia with U.S. support resulted in the rise of the even more extreme al-Shabaab.[4]

PH1 R. Oriez

An abandoned Mogadishu Street known as the Green Line, Jan 1993. In conflict action bereft of regional understanding is more likely to have cascading negative effects.

Ongoing efforts against al-Shabaab have resulted in a multipolar conflict in which U.S. interests and regional stability are intertwined with an increasingly fragile and tense coalition of African states that is bolstered by U.S. SOF and supported with security cooperation efforts by Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and U.S. Africa Command. The military defeat of al-Shabaab is certainly attainable, but again, it is uncertain how the vacuum they leave will be filled. Herein lies the importance of aligning multinational military, diplomatic, and development efforts in a manner that meets the interests of the Somali people, neighboring countries, the international community, and the United States. That is a far more uncertain proposition than the destruction of a terrorist network.

Regional

Despite its importance, the military has been stymied in efforts to institutionalize and apply regional expertise. The U.S. military's need for regional understanding became readily apparent in World War II, when the Army found itself fighting in diverse locations that included Western Europe, North Africa, China, and multiple distinct Pacific island settings. Miscalculations in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq later reinforced this need. As the world's population approaches eight billion people, there is no strategically relevant land area that does not possess multiple complex and changing population groups. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan created a newfound but short-lived and rudimentary emphasis on studying the culture of foreign operating environments, but these were largely limited to specific campaigns or generic examinations of culture.

Like Somalia in the 1990s and at present, Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s proved to be exceedingly complex battlegrounds and polities, overlaid with difficult languages and unfamiliar cultures. As such, operationally sound regional understanding needs to go beyond broad discussions of "culture" that objectify other peoples. They also need to go beyond basic forms of cross-cultural competence, abstract learning about "culture," and superficial social understandings. Culture, although important, is a challenging and often inappropriate unit of analysis for military plans and operations. To be effective, the current U.S. military mindset that anyone can go anywhere to do anything having only read a book or two and gotten a 30-minute cultural briefing needs to be discarded.

Regional expertise must also go beyond individual knowledge. It must include institutional knowledge that maintains continuity between rotational forces. Even where a baseline of regional knowledge does exist, this must be constantly updated through methodologically sound approaches that are woven into the tactical, operational, and strategic fabrics. Although the conventional military may earmark certain units for a particular AOR, this is in a manner that lacks personnel continuity or institutionalized training. It seems unlikely that the broader conventional force has the will to change this, despite conversations concerning the role and importance of regionally aligned forces. Rotations of field grade officers in and out of the GCCs, component commands, and sub-unified commands, assures that the personnel system will continue to staff the regionally aligned headquarters with exceptional soldiers, pilots, and surface warfare officers who have had no training or appreciable experience in a given region.

Moreover, in AFRICOM, which is based in Germany, continuity is undermined by the five-year rotation of civilian workers. This all but guarantees that an already limited supply of Africa specialists will not be able to entrench itself in a GCC that is still maturing. This lingering gap in U.S. military capability and the ongoing U.S. Army belief that the use of force, common sense, and solid planning are sufficient for success anywhere in the world can be likened to the U.S. unwillingness to create a separate Armor corps until 1940, France's reliance on the Maginot Line, and the notion that French élan could achieve success in 1914.

Herein lies a key comparative advantage of SOF within the U.S. military. SOF has the advantage of regionally aligning forces and thus plays a valuable role in comprehending multifaceted social settings. SOF has emphasized the importance of the human domain of warfare, which SOCOM defines as "the totality of the physical, cultural, and social environment that influence human behavior in a population-centric conflict."[5] However, even within SOF, the ongoing campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have diluted the emphasis on regional expertise. SOF does not have enough trained operators to be everywhere at once. As a result, the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq required a surge of all SOF. This came at the expense of building a generation of SOF regional expertise in other parts of the world. Crises in places as diverse as the Horn of Africa, Syria, and Afghanistan require specialized approaches and languages that account for the socio-economic structural underpinnings and motivations for conflict. This has renewed relevance in an increasingly multipolar world and in the midst of seemingly persistent conflict, where building relations and empowering regional states and organizations are logical remedies and are rightly a key element of U.S. diplomatic efforts and SOF activities.

Regional expertise and the ability to work with interagency partners have gained increased importance in what Fareed Zakaria refers to as the "post-American world." Zakaria posits an international domain in which U.S. supremacy is relatively less in the face of growing regional powers and organizations.[6] As a result, U.S. freedom of action is reduced and requires coordination and permission from partner/host nations and regional organizations. Paradoxically, SOF will increasingly find itself in regional or institutional situations where there is a greater need for freedom of action, but their actions will be under tenuous control by foreign governments that do not necessarily welcome an open and armed U.S. presence. In such situations, seamless interagency integration becomes a practical requirement, as opposed to a lofty objective or topic of instruction.

Despite the relative decline of U.S. influence, strategic access and combatting violent extremism remain cornerstones of our national security interests. With political limitations on "boots on the ground," furthering these interests requires strategic partnerships and the empowerment of regional actors. The use of strategic partners, though, cannot assume that these partners have the same interests, and to some extent, values, as us. This has proved troublesome in situations as diverse as the Diem government in Vietnam, Ethiopia, El Salvador, the former Zaire, Somalia, and Pakistan, as well as with opium-dealing warlord police chiefs and governors in Afghanistan. These approaches have often deteriorated into overly obvious forms of transactional diplomacy, rife with corruption

and often resulting in divisiveness, despite U.S. intentions of fostering inclusive civil societies. Transactional diplomacy accordingly goes only as far as we are willing to pay. As we have come to realize in places such as Djibouti, Pakistan, and Kyrgyzstan, the amount to maintain the transaction is by no means fixed. After the initial investment, proxies have a stronger bargaining position to demand more resources, such as payment for basing rights, and to diverge significantly from U.S. interests.

Whereas this falls primarily in the realm of diplomacy and is a strategic problem with no readily apparent solution, senior military leaders must still be aware of the larger context and be able to question inappropriate or one-sided military-to-military relationships. Although the United States might have had little choice but to provide continued military support in places such as Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, caution should be exercised in blindly acquiescing to host nation demands, especially where they involve a lack of reciprocal commitment to sustainability, defense institution building, and confidence-building. Military agreements and assistance packages may seem like logical metrics to reflect close security cooperation, but this is likewise obvious to host nations, which in turn are in an advantageous position to drive a lopsided bargain while not adhering to the spirit of the agreements. This harms the United States in its ability to exert future influence and undermines its moral credibility with oppressed population groups.

The use of proxies and the maintenance of transactional diplomacy may reduce, but does not obviate, the need for unified action in hazardous areas. The 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), for example, stressed the importance of increased civilian control and proposed that the State Department should operate more effectively in dangerous environments and to expand these efforts "despite the heightened risks."[7] Similarly, USAID brings money to a fight and often sends development specialists with an admirable knowledge of a given region. Economic development, humanitarian aid, and promoting civil society are indispensable elements in conflict resolution and stabilization. However, these activities can only go so far, especially if they do not seamlessly blend with military and security considerations. The U.S. Department of State is not the British Colonial Service, but rather an agency charged with maintaining diplomatic relations with a host nation's ministry of foreign affairs. Foreign Service Officers in DOS and USAID are not recruited, trained, or prepared to operate in combat zones, much less to piece societies back together in the midst of conflict.

The 2012 Benghazi attack clarified for the State Department that an acceptance of heightened risk equates to an acceptance of casualties. In the aftermath of Benghazi, the State Department has largely backtracked on this approach and has increased restrictions in hazardous environments, with Somalia being a case in point. Civilian control will still exist, but it will be less likely to be physically present in hazardous areas. The 2015 QDDR, while acknowledging that operating in dangerous areas is an integral element of diplomacy and development efforts throughout the world, nonetheless stresses managing and mitigating risk.[8] This creates space for enhanced interagency cooperation, particularly with SOF, which can provide conflict expertise, security, and access in hazardous regions that would otherwise be denied to diplomats and development specialists. This includes both SOF

and conventional Civil Affairs forces, which have overlapping missions with both DOS and USAID in areas such as governance, humanitarian assistance, and public health. In this regard, the military plays a valuable and singular role within interagency processes.

This role is likely to be in greater demand in a world facing increased population and competition over diminishing resources. As the world's population steadily increases, massive concentrations of individuals in the developing world are faced with a tenuous existence. In this vacuum, violence and extremist ideology will continue to gain a foothold as an expression of discontent. This convergence of factors makes it insufficient for SOF and the broader U.S. military to simply understand

religion, ideology, and extremism in an isolated manner. [9] There must also be an understanding of the social, political, and economic underpinnings that breed extremism and socio-political action. Gerald Hickey's 1967 anthropological analysis of the highlands of Vietnam, for example, highlighted the economic needs, political aspirations, and military realities of peoples marginalized by the South Vietnamese government.

This proved a prescient analysis for future military and political developments in that country and became a focal point for U.S. irregular warfare efforts in Vietnam. [10] Unfortunately, it did not sufficiently resonate with senior U.S. and South Vietnamese

U.S. Army

American troops destroying enemy bunkers in the highlands of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

government leaders to influence the overall strategy or outcome in Vietnam.

Senior Leaders

In his analysis of the congressional involvement with the U.S. military in the Korean conflict, T.R. Fehrenbach notes that while congressmen are hesitant to involve themselves in "specialized" matters concerning ships and aircraft, "almost any fool has felt in his heart he could command a regiment."[11] A similar observation can be made concerning today's senior military leaders regarding regional specialization. While generals have staffs that are designed to provide them with this type of specialized knowledge, this presumes that the staffs themselves are sufficiently capable. This will not necessarily be the case, especially in areas in which the military does not habitually operate and when leaders surround themselves with staff officers whom they trust, but who have inappropriate experiences and backgrounds. Inadequate knowledge can also be exacerbated by force protection measures which geographically place individuals in a region but limit their outside interactions; and noncombat environments where staffs are less inclined to provide clear recommendations to convergent problems with no clear answers. This can place senior leaders in a position where they feel a need to act even if they do not have a clear vision on how or why, leading to an attitude that Brigadier General Kimberly Field characterizes as "an attitude of winning plus combat arms commander-centric focus equals full spectrum success."[12]

Major Jason Warren expands on this theme with his contention that the U.S. Army has shifted from a focus on capable strategic leaders to what he refers to as centurions: tactically sound senior leaders who are not

necessarily prepared or have the mindset to operate in complex interagency settings.[13] The combat arms, to include surface warfare and aviation, do indeed provide a clear path for progression, but they do not automatically equip senior leaders and their staffs to face the challenges and social diversity characteristic of today's global operating environment. In contrast, FAOs often lack tactical experience relative to their peers, despite having significant training and experience in particular regions. In this respect, FAOs are not often viewed as upwardly mobile centurions and, ironically, are in a structurally inferior position to more tactically-experienced peers and senior leaders who are often new to, and unfamiliar with the region they are overseeing. The transference of tactical acumen to strategic and interagency settings, however, has not proven a sound method.

In a candid self-critique, for example, a former commander of Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa introduced an article on his experiences in CJTF-HOA by recognizing the complexity of the region, but saying that he was given three weeks' notice for his assignment and that he "would have been hard pressed to identify Djibouti on a map, let alone appreciate the scope and challenge of my assignment."[14] Combined with a constantly rotating staff with little experience in Africa and little institutional memory, this continued CJTF-HOA's unbalanced relationships with interagency counterparts in the region. Although not ideal, CJTF-HOA's limited base of regional knowledge and experience was offset by a cadre of experienced military attachés and country teams at embassies in the CJTF-HOA AOR, as well as guidance and restraint by ambassadors. This, however, is a luxury that will not always exist, especially for

ad hoc task forces in contingency operations as well as SOF elements operating in more remote settings. In such circumstances, such a lack of experience and preparation is both reckless and dangerous.

Recognizing the limitations of many senior leaders, SDO/DATTs, as the diplomatically accredited senior defense officials in their assigned countries, are designed to be the primary tool with which senior military leaders interact with the embassy country team, to include the ambassador. Protocol requirements and social niceties aside, there should not be any aura of prestige in interacting directly with ambassadors. A newly assigned general officer who insists on flying in for a meeting with an ambassador with scripted talking points and without first sitting down with the SDO/DATT in a one-on-one discussion displays a destructive misunderstanding of the role of the SDO/DATT, and their daily interactions and trust with the ambassador and country team. Ambassadors are not action officers and should not be placed in that position. Like general officers, ambassadors should be decision makers who reach conclusions and resolve conflicts based on the combined products of multiple parties that are born from solid staff work. Here staff work can be characterized as a synthesis of coordination, perspectives of multiple parties, knowledge of the operating context, and a decided absence of dogmatism that can hinder negotiation and compromise.

Similar caution should be exercised in dealing with host nation counterparts. Within a U.S. embassy, relationship building is a methodology that is executed through a continuous effort to obtain mutual understanding of respective intents, desired endstates, and policy constraints. This is not to say that senior leaders should not meet with key host nation leaders, but that meetings should be conducted with a recognition that the SDO/DATT and country team should be the ones empowered to maintain relations, and not be relegated to a disempowered administrative facilitator for general officer visits that are often vague of purpose, full of optimism, and short on duration, knowledge and content. Like an effective reserve, visiting senior leaders must be guided to the *Schwerrpunkt* of an interagency battlefield and committed to reinforce success or offset failure. They cannot always position themselves as the main effort.

Attempting to reproduce the system of perfunctory key leader engagements (KLEs) from Iraq and Afghanistan elsewhere in the world may give an outward appearance of relationship-building, but may also undermine nuanced and continuous efforts that are born from a deeper understanding of the operating environment than most general officers are able to attain. Absent concerted U.S. military efforts to develop a reproducing and vertically aligned base of expertise, senior military leaders' intentions of building trust and long term relationships with host nations are often unrealistic. For such reasons, it is sometimes common for ambassadors to insist on accompanying senior military leaders to meetings with host nation counterparts. While this may be perceived as micromanaging in a manner that undermines U.S. military credibility, it is suggestive of the manner in which interagency counterparts often perceive the military as well as the intricate hybrid political-military context that exists in many non-Western militaries.

The Way Ahead

Develop Relevant Knowledge: The understanding of an operating environment must go

beyond simplistic notions of culture, thinking that if we do not show the soles of our feet, we will gain respect. So too must knowledge go beyond simplistic surveys and assessments that are prone to reduce intangibles into quantified tangibles. So too must generic methodologies be tailored to specific operating environments.

Breadth must be replaced with Depth: Regional overviews do not provide a sufficient knowledge base for complex operations. The Army War College, Air War College, and National War College, for example, provide senior officer students with regional instruction, but students are encouraged to select a region in which they have little or no familiarity. An African FAO, for example, is discouraged from taking electives on Africa. This approach provides a travel guide level of knowledge that gives familiarity with strategic issues, but not necessarily understanding. In short, in the present system, it prepares someone to go to a GCC, but it does not provide the GCC with the level of knowledge necessary to formulate optimally effective plans or to operate on an equal footing with interagency counterparts.

War colleges should instead focus on advanced studies of geo-strategic issues, not introductory level studies for students who do not have a foundation of first-hand experience. These would ideally start in intermediate level education and influence assignments for the duration of that officer's career, to include more advanced studies at war colleges. Command emphasis should also be placed on attendance at the existing regional programs at the Army's Special Warfare Center and the Air Force's Special Operations School. Furthermore, as the U.S. military continues its self-hypnosis about being a learning organization, this must extend to regional studies. As such, regional positions as instructors/professors at military academic institutions should be viewed as dynamic platforms for promising leaders.

Empower SDO/DATTs: There must be recognition that the rapport between SDO/DATTs and senior leaders should transcend purely hierarchical relationships. A general officer would be loath to give medical advice to a doctor or technical advice to a pilot, regardless of their rank. In a similar vein, that same general officer needs to recognize the specialist nature of being a Foreign Area Officer and Defense Attaché. This requires a departure from a cognitive paradigm of favoring tactical prowess over regional understanding. This does not relieve FAOs from being tactically sound and understanding both conventional and SOF operations, but rather recognizes their critical enabler function, particularly in embassy settings.

SOF Liaison Elements (SOFLE): Especially in the absence of military attachés with a background in special operations, SOFLEs play an invaluable role in coordinating SOF activities and advising the ambassador and country team. The effectiveness of SOFLEs, however, is diminished as a result of their high turnover rates and short-duration missions. All too often, they are also new to a region. Optimally, SOFLE tenure in an embassy should exceed one year.[15] Furthermore, offering these officers the opportunity to bring their families to some embassy environments on extended rotations would enhance familiarization with both foreign and interagency cultures, and provide for more sustainable staffing.

Understand Budgets and Authorities: In the modern interagency battlefield, the understanding of resources and authorities can be more important than knowledge of weapon systems or the enemy order of battle, especially where funds are approved by one agency and executed by another. Lines of effort, critical events, and decisive points that are not synchronized with specific authorities, resources, and timelines for budget allocation are not only command approved fictions, they are distractors from the longer term approaches most characteristic of U.S. embassy country teams. This is no longer the exclusive purview of security cooperation officers and SOF; this knowledge must extend to senior leaders and staffs throughout the military.

Partnerships with the Host Nation: Partnerships with a host nation can proffer significant gains, but they often require long-term relationships built on trust, not short-term imperatives. A SOF captain who goes to a country for a short-duration mission will likely develop relationships with foreign counterparts. If that same officer returns as a major and again as a lieutenant colonel, he then has the opportunity to expand upon those relationships and levels of trust in a manner that will have military benefit. If he later has the opportunity to be assigned to the U.S. Embassy as a SOFLE or military attaché in that country, he will have a level of credibility, network of senior contacts, and expertise highly valued and utilized by country team counterparts.

Institutional memory rests with people, not with databases: By definition, databases reduce the richness of knowledge into storable and accessible data. This, however, presumes that the people drawing on that data have a sufficient base of knowledge to understand, contextualize, and apply it. Furthermore, interagency partners cannot always be relied upon to provide relevant and accurate regional understanding or to have the access to attain such knowledge. This is a capability that must be firmly rooted in both SOF and the larger military.

Balance SOF Roles: Prowess in direct action cannot come at the expense of emphasis on being able to understand operating environments and the consequences of direct action. An understanding of basic socio-economic dynamics, for example, can be more important than the names of individual insurgents, who perhaps should be viewed less as the sources of conflict and more as symptoms of larger issues. Their removal may in turn exacerbate instability rather than promote it.

Critical Thinking Cannot Replace Actual Knowledge: Approaches such as operational design and critical thinking must be methodologically sound complements to a strong base of knowledge, not a substitute. "Critical Thinking" and operational design models, in addition to providing fresh and unbiased insights, can also be crutches used to compensate for inadequate preparation and experience. There is an inherent contradiction in "questioning assumptions" when a staff does not have the base of knowledge to adequately understand those assumptions or the likely unintended consequences of action. This lack of knowledge diminishes the staff role of advising commanders and can result in increased command-influenced groupthink, potentially placing the military in a subservient and/or confrontational role with interagency partners

With this in mind, it is interesting that the same former CJTF-HOA commander recounts in his article that his lack of regional knowledge was actually an asset because it allowed him to approach the challenges he faced with an open mind.[16] The article concludes with the ultimate success of his tenure as a commander and the knowledge he attained. While in no way disputing this finding, it is interesting to conjecture how much more successful he would have been had he had any sort of background or experience in the region or experience working in a U.S. embassy.

Conclusion

In Afghanistan and Iraq the U.S. military operated so long without credible regional understanding, expertise, and continuity that these elements have largely lost value in leadership and decisionmaking structures. In both cases a failure to understand and operationally account for basic social factors played a significant role in the challenges faced by the U.S. military and its interagency partners. Even with the benefit of hindsight, many in the U.S. military still do not fully comprehend the complexity and nuance that the United States and its coalition partners faced in those settings. Attempting to repeat the performance of Iraq and Afghanistan in newly relevant operating environments is to invite failure.

In today's globalized world, clear dividing lines between stability operations and combat operations no longer exist. These terms are but categorizations of convenience imposed by the U.S. military. Populations can no longer be segregated from conflict, and understanding the socio-economic drivers of conflict is something that SOF must have the same proficiency

U.S. Soldiers transport and unpack humanitarian aid to an Afghani town.

in as direct action. DOD Instruction 3000.5 (Stability Operations) rightly blurs the lines between combat and stability, which are often overlapping and concurrent. Both types of operations require ongoing efforts to understand changing social structures and attitudes. This requires not just regionally knowledgeable field operators, but also complementary higher staffs. If it is unrealistic for the conventional military to gain and maintain these skills due to personnel shortfalls and worldwide rotational requirements, it is increasingly incumbent on SOF to make up for these shortfalls.

While SOF is on the forefront of many of these undertakings, it is by no means alone, nor is it a guarantor of its own success. Interagency partners such as the State Department and USAID play a valuable role in gaining approval for action, as well as adding to a broader comprehension of the operating environment. In turn, there must be a reciprocal willingness to understand and systematically incorporate these perspectives into plans and operations, especially in other than declared theaters of conflict scenarios. This requires more than common sense, campaign plan rhetoric, and force of will by senior officers. It requires in-depth knowledge of the factors underlying social systems, and methods to incorporate changing conditions into plans and operations.

It is too late to attempt to gain such knowledge in compressed crisis action timelines. Military education, combined with Phase Zero operations and partnering with interagency counterparts in U.S. embassies, provides the opportunity to enhance U.S. military capability. However, these experiences must be meaningful. If they are not utilized as a means to invest in people and capture complex social analysis, they will produce superficial long-term benefits. In Iraq, Fallujah and Baghdad were complex scenarios, but their scale pales in comparison to megacities and imploded societies throughout much of the developing world. Major urban areas, ethnic wars, and resource-driven conflict are indeed complex to a degree that might appear incomprehensible. However, now is the time to factor that complexity (and the limitations it will engender) into our plans and capabilities so we can properly assess realistic and achievable goals and endstates. **PRISM**

Notes

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U.S. Marines, local residents and Philippine army soldiers work together to unload supplies in Operation Goodwill Delivery.

Context is King

The Importance of Regional Narratives and History to the Special Operator and Strategic Communications

BY JONATHON COSGROVE

"We are better persuaded, for the most part, by the reasons that we ourselves arrived at than by those that have come into the minds of others." – Blaise Pascal

The Special Operations Forces (SOF) community is exceptional and unique in the broader institution of the United States military. The U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) states as chief among the "SOF Truths" that "people—not equipment—make the critical difference" in the success of special operations.[2] Although clearly referring to the highly trained members of the SOF across the service branches, this truth also reflects the importance of people (or "the human domain")[3] in SOF missions. The factors of the human domain are "the psychological, cultural, behavioral, and other human attributes that influence decisionmaking, the flow of information, and the interpretation of information by individuals and groups."[4] It is hard to overstate the importance of these human factors to the special operator.

The focus of this article will be on the missions and doctrines most closely associated with U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), which are by their nature particularly concerned with the human factors of a given area of operations. Two core ARSOF tasks, unconventional warfare (UW)[5] and foreign internal defense (FID),[6] are missions that require personal, one-on-one interaction with either an indigenous resistance movement or a friendly host government to foster shared commitment and action toward a common objective. In both UW and FID, the sentiments and motivations of the regional population are critical factors to mission success and must be central in strategic and operational planning. Special operators strive to address and

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influence these sentiments and motivations through narratives—the stories through which people and societies understand beliefs, values, norms, and themselves.[7]

Throughout the history of U.S. special operations and counterinsurgency (COIN), the efforts to address popular sentiments in areas of operations through narratives (such as "winning hearts and minds") have had mixed results. Understanding regional history and narratives can offer key insights for more consistently successful military information support operations (MISO)[8] and strategic communications[9] to achieve sustainable mission objectives. This mindset will be critical as the SOF community looks ahead to the missions of the 21st century, where the human domain will continue to be paramount.

In summary, U.S. Army and ARSOF doctrine on irregular warfare (IW)[10] provides critical insights on the importance of regional, historic, and cultural narratives and their roles in irregular conflicts and mission success. Successful strategic communications depend on the resonance of the narrative they present. An operational narrative resonates best when it both addresses the needs of the population (or audience) and does so in a way that is consistent with what they hold to be true. If strategic communications contradict or do not reinforce the long-established and deeply-held perceptions of the target audience, the message will fail to resonate and will instead sound foreign or counterfeit, producing neither action nor good will. For this reason, the special operator must be an expert in these cultural narratives, and adept at perceiving and using them to shape the information and military environments.

Narrative and History in Army Doctrine on Irregular Warfare

Doctrine in Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, addresses important points on the role of narrative and history in IW, informs SOF missions (specifically COIN, but also speaks to principles at the core of both UW and FID), and is well cited in ARSOF doctrine specific to these core tasks.

According to FM 3-24, resistance takes root in the desire of individuals to throw off conditions imposed on them by a government or occupying power that diverge from their interests, aspirations, values, and way of life. These conditions and associated perceptions are root causes, which "can be summarized as a broad perception of injustice linked to the government that insurgents use to mobilize a population,"[11] and can include infringements on identity or religion, the presence of foreign forces, government corruption, land disputes, and gaps between popular expectations of the government and its capability to meet their expectations.[12] However, a general attitude of discontent and the existence of root causes alone do not necessarily lead to insurgency. The population must also possess the will to bear significant hardships, as countermeasures against resistance are often severe.

While root causes are the components that can coalesce into the will to resist, insurgency is not a necessary conclusion, as "these conditions exist in many places where an insurgency does not."[13] The framework that mobilizes part of the population from grievances to resistance is a cohesive narrative for action. Examples flourish throughout history and include the Marxist story of the inevitable rise of a long-dormant proletariat against an oppressive bourgeoisie retold by Communist party

vanguards, as well as that told by Sayyid Qutb, a leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, of a global Muslim community that is spiritually dead and must be reconquered from the clutches of godlessness through jihad.[14]

The narrative "links grievances to a political agenda and mobilizes the population to support a violent social movement."[15] It does this by assigning blame for wrongs, explaining how grievances will be addressed, and proclaiming a call to action that presents the uprising as likely to succeed if the insurgent forces and population work together. Because an insurgency must justify its actions, the narrative framework is usually constructed around an ideology.[16] "Not all insurgencies are ideological,"[17] doctrine states, but "[i]deology often provides a coherent set of ideas that provide a compelling framework for a narrative"[18] that resonates with the population. Turning again to Qutb's *Milestones*, the primacy of sharia law not only gave his call to action ideological coherence, but also served as the focus and final purpose of the whole enterprise.[19] The ideal made real on Earth.

Narrative resonance—when a story is instinctively accepted as plausible—is a vital high ground in the information war between insurgencies and COIN operations. Each side of a conflict must either convince or pacify that segment of the population not yet committed to a side (the uncommitted majority) in order to either establish or maintain legitimacy.[20] For this reason, a poor, ill-suited, or inconsistent narrative can be the strategic downfall of any actor in irregular conflict. Narrative dissonance—when a story is instinctively rejected as implausible—can spell defeat. In Egypt, the Arab Spring brought a wave of mass protests against the authoritarianism of President Hosni Mubarak, successfully ejecting him from office. President Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood entered office on a narrative of reform from authoritarianism to democracy. However, Morsi's attempts to unilaterally monopolize power soon undermined the viability of this narrative. The story of post-authoritarian democracy was contradicted by the reality of Morsi's new, oppressive Islamist regime. The dissonance of the Muslim Brotherhood's actions with their narrative was the source of extreme dissatisfaction and popular unrest, setting the stage for yet another change of regime.[21]

In the operational context of FID or COIN, the insurgent often has a strategic advantage in constructing an effective narrative. Insurgencies are usually composed of fighters operating "in their own country and own ethnic group" who have an "intimate knowledge of...the local people and their culture."[22] This knowledge also includes close familiarity with the root causes and grievances that target populations might share with the insurgents. For example, members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) needed no briefings on the historical, sociopolitical, and sectarian underpinnings of popular tensions between the people of Ireland and Great Britain.

COIN and FID operations, according to doctrine, must "successfully incorporate culture into planning...in order to understand the area of operations prior to developing any course of action"[23] because effective forces "must ensure that their deeds match their words and both are consistent with the broader narrative."[24] Otherwise, inconsistent actions will have negative information reactions (that is, they will create a perception that undermines credibility and plays into the

propagation of insurgent forces).[25] Historically, one can look to the "Boston Massacre" of 1770, and the public disillusionment that followed, as an information reaction that crippled the ability of the British Empire to maintain its colonies.

The public reaction against the British crown, driven by Paul Revere's famous illustration (see figure 1), shows how a resistance movement can leverage the actions of its opponent to reinforce their story of what was wrong and their argument for why the population should side with them. Although the British soldiers were ultimately acquitted of murder, the Sons of Liberty successfully incorporated the tragedy into their own cause by

Figure 1 "The Fruits of Arbitrary Power, or the Bloody Massacre"

speaking to a broader, pre-existing narrative of colonial subjugation and violence under British rule, inflaming public opinion in favor of independence on the road to war.[26] Britain could no longer convincingly argue to the colonies that its troops were there to protect them. The subsequent trial vindicated the British troops and revealed that the crowd was in fact a violent mob, but the image of helpless colonists against a firing line of Redcoats was ingrained in the public consciousness. This version of the story became so fundamental to the story of the founding of the United States that it is to this day described and taught in schools as the Boston Massacre. The innocence of the British troops appears as an afterthought at best in many modern accounts. The "bloody massacre" narrative resonated so well with the American colonists because it reinforced their own experiences and perceptions of themselves as powerless in the face of unjust British rule. The truth prevailed in the court of law, but perception won the hearts and minds of the American patriots.

Insurgents also need to be careful and keep their actions consistent with their words to protect against information reactions because their credibility can also be undermined in the eyes of the people. As chronicled by Clifford Bob in *Marketing Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism*, insurgents in need of foreign support will often water down their radical language and narrative to make themselves attractive to foreign donors, whether they be governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).[27] Such efforts potentially make the resistance look hypocritical, or even bought, and represent a clear opportunity for COIN information operations. Highlighting inconsistencies in insurgent words and deeds, painting them as

beholden to foreign interests—or at least inconsistent with the values and sentiments of the general population—can create an information environment that favors the government's legitimacy.

Loss of credibility can be fatal to a COIN mission. This is why "[p]ropaganda is one of the most important political tools an insurgency has." It allows the group "to create a narrative of why the government's actions are not legitimate, and how the insurgency can eliminate the root causes of the conflict."[28] The information apparatus of the insurgent force will not hesitate to leverage any action that reinforces its propaganda about the government or occupying force, and will often manipulate real-world circumstances to reinforce it. An example of deliberate insurgent actions to perpetuate propaganda narratives is found in a case in 2014 in which Hamas issued statements during a renewed cycle of violent conflict with Israel that urged Palestinian civilians to stay in their homes despite Israeli warnings of an impending strike. The situation was compounded by Hamas operations meant to draw Israeli retaliatory fire on civilian structures.[29] The maintenance of the Hamas narrative concerning Israeli military actions and their impact on Palestinian civilians is of existential importance to their operations and long-term political strategy, both of which depend on the support of Palestinians caught in the crossfire of the conflict.

As long as Hamas can successfully paint itself as the hero in the story of the Palestinian people, they will continue to secure widespread support.

The importance of regional history and indigenous culture in developing narratives cannot be overstated in U.S. Army doctrine on insurgencies. There is inherent complexity in

how culture and narrative influence "how people view their world;" it is something holistic, learned, shared, and created by people, constantly changing over time.[30] When assessing a cultural situation, the special operator is advised in doctrine that "discussing history with the local people can be a window into understanding the way that people in that area define a problem....Stories, sayings and even poetry can reveal cultural narratives, the shared explanations of why the world is a certain way."[31]

These internalized narratives—the stories of how people view themselves and their place in the world—play a central role in the will of individuals or communities to resist the government or occupier, stand with them against

insurgent forces, or disengage from the conflict completely. This connection is best characterized by Thomas E. Lawrence (known more famously as "Lawrence of Arabia") in his seminal work, "Twenty-Seven Articles," on irregular warfare in the Middle East:

> The[ir] open reason…for action or inaction may be true, but always there will be better reasons left for you to divine. You must find these inner reasons (they will be denied, but are none the less in operation) before shaping your arguments for one course or other… Their minds work just as ours do, but on different premises. There is nothing unreasonable, incomprehensible, or inscrutable in [them]. Experience of

Magnus Manske

In Ramallah, a Palestinian city located in the central West Bank, crowds of people gather to show their support for Hamas. In certain parts of Palestine, Hamas is viewed as a protector against the Israel Defense Force (IDF).

them, and knowledge of their prejudices will enable you to foresee their attitude and possible course of action in nearly every case [...] hear all that passes, search out what is going on beneath the surface...and keep everything you find out to yourself.[32]

"Narratives," FM 3-24 states, "are tied to actions in an operational environment."[33] The viability of the narrative in addressing the needs of the population (that is, root causes) is key to the success of the operations and strategic communications of insurgents and governments alike. The "inner reasons" under the surface of the population are not of peripheral or secondary importance. In the 21st century, where resistance movements are more likely to succeed through popular mobilization to nonviolent protest than they are using more traditional forms of insurgency or guerrilla warfare,[34] the inner reasons that motivate people and communities to action—or deter involvement—are the center of gravity. For that reason, effective strategic communications will only become more critical to mission success in the future. Getting narratives correct in operational planning and coordinating both actions and communications to achieve and maintain resonance with the target population are essential to success in this new century of conflict.

Narrative, Needs, and Resonance

The root causes of a resistance movement or an insurgency can be understood as needs. Narrative frameworks are the rhetorical means through which a group or movement mobilizes the population to address these needs through violent or civil resistance. Needs are defined by some as "conditions within the individual that are essential and necessary for the maintenance of life and for the nurturance of growth and well-being."[35] However, for our purposes, it is important to avoid an assumption of individualism in how we conceptualize needs. Many cultures deemphasize the individual, elevating communal or tribal concerns. Strategic communications that try to reach such collectivist cultures with narratives that prioritize the concerns of individuals will be challenged in their viability from the start. Instead, Aristotle's characterization of needs is more appropriate: "Natural cravings constitute such needs; in particular cravings, accompanied by pain, for what is not being attained."[36] In other words, a need is any object or state of being without which one experiences physical or cognitive distress. The pain of hunger or thirst, the anxiety of poverty or insecurity, and the emotional instability of bereavement or discouragement all qualify, though these different forms of distress do not stem from the same *kinds* of needs.

Abraham Maslow claimed that there are five general categories of needs that human beings try to satisfy in ascending order (see figure 2): *physiological* (those that keep humans alive); *safety* (security from dangers); *belonging* (includes love, companionship, and one's place in society); *self-esteem* (those concerning individual confidence and independent will); and *self-actualization* (the final goal after all other needs are met; when one becomes all they are capable of being).[37] However, this is an imperfect representation that is often criticized as focused on individualist motivations to the neglect of those in collectivist societies.[38] Such fixation on the Western mindset puts analysts at risk of mirror imaging, a cognitive trap where one assumes the target audience thinks like the analyst does. Nevertheless, Maslow's hierarchy presents a useful insight

into how the special operator should think about needs.

For the special operator, who must understand the "inner reasons" of the population to communicate for action or inaction, the general rule that needs are addressed in ascending order is of particular importance. If the target population is preoccupied with physiological and safety needs essential for survival, narratives that try to mobilize them through an appeal to ideology (self-actualization) will likely fail. The perception of a goal's attainability is also a factor here ("How can you dream of revolution when we can't put food on the table?"), and is why populations that have long lived under dictatorship are less likely to mobilize than those only recently oppressed.

The reinforcement of inevitability narratives, through time as well as propaganda, stifles resistance, whereas populations under a newly burgeoning authoritarian state can rally around the collective memory of the freedom that was only recently lost.[39] Both of these factors are often cited to explain the surprising lack of resistance against the regime of Kim Jong-un in North Korea. The persistence of widespread hunger,[40] merciless crackdowns,[41] and a long history where plans for resistance were time and again proven futile[42] have worked together to make even the thought of a successful uprising seem far-fetched to a people struggling to survive. Instead, the story in which Kim Il-sung is the "Eternal President of the Republic,"[43] whose endless reign, ominously affirmed by 3,200 obelisks across the country ("Towers of Eternal Life"),[44] is

Figure 2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- **Self-actualization**: morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts
- **Esteem**: self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others
- **Love/Belonging**: friendship, family, sexual intimacy
- **Safety**: security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property
- **Physiological**: breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

combined with all the other trappings of a personality cult to reinforce an overbearing narrative of invincibility and fatalism.

Importantly, however, the use of Maslow's hierarchy presents significant risk for mirror imaging that the special operator must take caution against. In reference to the hierarchy, Steven Metz states in *Small Wars Journal* that "people become insurgents because the status quo does not fulfill their needs." This means,

> …*that the true essence of insurgency is not political objectives, but unmet psychological needs (although political objectives may serve as proxy for psychological needs as insurgent leaders seek to legitimize and popularize their efforts). While insurgency unfolds within a specific cultural context which causes much of the variation in it, basic human needs are trans-cultural.*[45]

While this is certainly true at the base of Maslow's hierarchy, where the universal needs of physiology and safety are inherent to humanity as a species, it becomes more complicated as one ascends the pyramid into higher needs. As some scholars have written, in trying to convince a population to move toward change, mental models, beliefs, and attitudes unique to any given society are important factors to consider if one is to create a compelling vision that will bring "a sense of purpose that encourages people to change their actions."[46]

Needs are the building blocks that make up the root causes of collective action cited in doctrine, but they are not in themselves sufficient to cause resistance. As North Korea demonstrates, needs alone do not cause resistance. Only when those needs are given a context or framework wherein resistance makes sense to the "inner reasons" of a people, and seems to provide a viable path to success, will they decide that the effort is worth the risk and sacrifice. Walter R. Fisher famously proposed the narrative paradigm theory of human communication and understanding. He argued that human beings are storytellers, reasoning through decisions and actions based on the context of their own stories, which then interact with larger narratives. According to Fisher, people do not rely on logic and reason as classically defined to make decisions, but rather draw "good reasons" from "history, biography, culture, and character" to then choose an option that seems to meet their needs.[47]

The special operator should take away two fundamental principles. First, while metrics like those from *The World Factbook* (GDP, population, resources, etc.) are important indicators on emerging conflicts, the intangibles of society (convictions, history, justice, culture, tradition, identity, etc.) are the real guideposts that translate needs into action when special operators communicate with a population. The words of T.E. Lawrence regarding Arab society and their faith hold true for all people: they hold "conviction of the truth…[that] share in every act and thought and principle of their daily life," so ingrained "as to be unconscious, unless roused by opposition."[48] Whether they are called narratives, worldviews, or convictions of truth, these are at the heart of what motivates people and communities to risk their lives for a cause.

Second, people and communities are always testing, probing, and assessing the claims of others (especially outsiders) according to what they know or believe to be true, and will likely reject new claims that introduce inconsistencies or, worse, indict their convictions as wrong or backward. Fisher characterized this process as testing "narrative

probability," which concerns what makes a coherent story, and "narrative fidelity," which determines whether or not a new claim or story is consistent with currently held views.[49] Fisher advises that this testing and awareness is "inherent," informed by a "constant habit of testing" that the stories they are told or experience ring true with the stories they already know to be true in their lives.[50]

In other words, the special operator may know that what a target population wants is justice, and so frame strategic communications to say that actions and outcomes aligned with U.S. interests are steps toward justice. But how is justice framed by the population? How is it imagined? Strategic communications will likely fail if the reasoning and language of justice look, feel, and sound American because the target population knows their own reasoning and will impulsively reject what does not cohere with what they know. If, however, strategic communications are formed in light of what justice looks like *for that society*, then narrative fidelity increases. Emulation and amplification of existing voices aligned with mission objectives is even more desirable. Actions are also critical to this natural probing. If the actions of the special operator are inconsistent with the claims or narratives they present then the target audience will notice and reject the message. "What you have really done," T.E. Lawrence warns, "is to build a wall between you and their inner selves."[51] Thus, your ability to persuade that audience has been lost.

Additional insights into a narrative paradigm for thinking about resistance are found in the field of social movement theory, which seeks to explain how and why groups mobilize in collective action in both resistance and traditional activist movements. As described by Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, the narrative nature of social movements can be divided into three frames that lead the audience to agree that collective action makes sense: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames. Diagnostic frames first describe the problem and identify victims. Prognostic frames then articulate a proposed solution and strategy. Finally, motivational frames provide the population with the rationale for mobilization and engagement in collective action, usually including a vocabulary (or talking points) for resistance.[52] Knowledge of this logical progression in how resistance leaders make appeals to populations is particularly useful to the special operator in COIN operations, where strategic communications need to undermine popular sympathy for the insurgency and disrupt recruitment efforts.

The narrative frames outlined by Benford and Snow are likewise important for UW operations, where strategic communications seek to engender sympathy, support, and mobilization for resistance movements and against the hostile government or occupier among the population. However, the seemingly clear-cut structure of this framework opens up the risk of a formulaic approach to the construction of strategic communication narratives. While mobilizations require conceptions of problems, victims, culprits, and attainable solutions, the SOF operator must be careful to avoid approaching each element as a fill-in-the-blank system prompt, where any value will do. Such a reductionist approach to framing and presenting the case for mobilization (UW) or demobilization (COIN) would inevitably result in strategic communications that strike the audience as artificial, implausible, or unconvincing.

Hurried and careless narrative construction can also threaten the credibility of the

message through unintentional mirror-imaging—offering stories that look and sound like our own. No matter how meticulously constructed and widely propagated, such attempts will collapse under the constant barrage of popular examination, probing, opinion, and sentiment because the story does not fit. Such defeats in the information battle, especially if systematized in operational planning, would deliver fatal blows to the authenticity of the allies on the ground in the eyes of the population, thus inflicting irreparable damage to U.S. mission objectives over the long term. The audience has likely already built the components of an effective narrative themselves. An effective strategic communication will not simply try to reframe the mission objectives for the audience, but will listen to what they are already saying and repeat it back to them in the form of a call to action.

Maslow suggests that as the developing world rises economically, its popular sociopolitical movements will ascend from concern with the base needs (subsistence and security) to the elevated human needs (justice, morality, and self-actualization). Because of this climb up Maslow's hierarchy, the reasoning, language, and stories used by leaders to mobilize these movements will likewise elevate from the simple identification of problems, villains, and solutions to arguments of justice, identity, history, and meaning. For this reason, the pre-existing cultural and historical narratives of societies about themselves and their own stories (or metanarratives) will become more influential in mobilizing a population and therefore more important to the special operator.

Our natural human tendency to mine for meaning in the cultural history of a society to motivate action was evident in the Arab Spring of 2011. Demonstrators in Egypt and Tunisia venerated those who died at the hands of legal authorities, either in captivity or in the streets, as martyrs for their nation. Analysis in the *Journal of Communication* showed that activist commemorations of *shuhada* (martyrs) drew from a deep well of historical, social, and religious potency.[53] These "martyr narratives in Tunisia and Egypt [date] back to pre-Islamic periods" and were translated "from the traditional religious context to the state-driven concept of civil religion," serving as a catalyst for mobilization.[54] Memorials for the dead were not only present in the streets, but also in new media, taking the form of reliquaries for martyrs shared through the Internet and social media. For this reason, it is important to note that new media and the Internet are not sufficient vehicles for change in a vacuum; they are a vehicle only, not a catalyst. "There must be," according to the authors, "a context in which certain narratives can resonate and serve as the foundation for an imagined solidarity and imagined politics of hope and change."[55] They conclude that "attention to the narrative landscape must be included in investigations of political communication and social unrest."[56] If religious-historical stories that predate even Islam can contribute to the mobilization of movements that changed the political landscape of the whole Middle East, narratives cannot be seen as peripheral or of passing importance to the missions of the special operator.

Likewise, there are also examples where narratives collapse and are rejected as false for trying to supersede the persistent and recurring historical stories (that is, how things have always happened) that shape how the population determines narrative probability. The story of liberation from the oppression of Saddam Hussein as a result of Operation *Iraqi*

Freedom, which brought the promise of a better life under representative democratic government (as opposed to strongmen, which was a pattern both in Iraq and throughout the region) later dissolved in the face of protracted conflict, poverty, and sectarian strife. The disillusionment of a once supportive public regarding the presence of U.S. forces soon followed because the narrative of liberation from the oppression of strongmen was intuitively reassessed as improbable by Iraqis in the context of their experiences. For Sunnis in particular, the new experience of retributive disenfranchisement under the Shia government saw the optimistic narrative of democratic liberation lose all credibility. Instead, two historically persistent patterns took its place: sectarian repression and "the conflict between political fragmentation and centralization" that has persisted in Iraq since "the struggles among tribes and cities for the food-producing flatlands of the river valleys."[57]

Indeed, after the departure of U.S. forces, it would have been a safe bet to wager on a repetition of the traditional narrative cycle of Iraqi conflict, where aggressive suppression by a centralizing government in Baghdad in turn provokes retaliation from traditionally fragmented regional and tribal populations. When the systematic exclusion and suppression of northern Sunni opposition by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki that began in late 2012 reached critical mass,[58] the Sunni tribal militias that once expelled al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) formed a tenuous alliance with their new incarnation (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL) in 2014 through the Baathist-led General Military Council of Iraqi Revolutionaries (GMCIR).[59] This alliance of convenience was formed to wage a large military offensive from northern Iraq and gain regional autonomy from the government in Baghdad.[60]

It was a decisive rejection of the narrative of a democratic and unified Iraqi state. Rejection of Iraqi unity was further solidified by the independent efforts of Iraqi Kurdish forces to take control of key regions of contention from ISIL, insisting they would hold the oil-rich regions despite complaints from Baghdad, even threatening referendums for independence.[61] The ongoing conflict in Iraq and Syria, while dominated in the public consciousness by the atrocities of the so-called Islamic State and the persistence of its "caliphate," is a reversion back to an old regional narrative: the cyclical spurning of central governance by local tribal networks. The perception that Iraq is on the verge of dissolution is only the modern telling of a recurring story, one that the Iraqi people know very well.

Implications for the Special Operator

The core missions of ARSOF and the wider SOF community require an effective capability to speak to the host or target population in ways that shape their sentiment and actions in directions that support mission success. The strategic communications and planning required for the special operator to do this will inevitably offer the audience a story, or narrative, that will hopefully resonate with the population as coherent, plausible, consistent, and addressing their needs. If the narrative content of strategic communications fails to ring true with the audience, it will also likely fail to mobilize as planned, thus threatening mission success. In particular, the story told through both strategic communications and actions should strive to be consistent with stories the target population already accepts to be true about themselves, whether political, cultural,

religious, or social. Inconsistency with these accepted stories undermines the legitimacy or viability of the one told by the special operator.

The philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote that "we are better persuaded, for the most part, by the reasons that we ourselves arrived at than by those that have come into the minds of others."[62] These are the "inner reasons" highlighted by T.E. Lawrence, which are both communicated through, and reinforced by, the traditions, principles, histories, and stories of a society. These are the raw materials that the special operator must know and use to shape the narrative of operations and strategic communications in support of UW, FID, and COIN missions. If strategic communications instead provide a narrative that implicitly mirror-images our own needs, concerns, and stories as reflecting those of the target population, they will likely fail to convince anyone.

The nuance of local narrative and culture is one reason why, as U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer John Cochran said, "UW is the most difficult and complex of any form of combat," because it "requires its soldiers to meld into the sociological and physical environment"[63] so well that the people of the country in question feel ownership of and pride in the resistance to which they are inspired. The Solidarity movement is viewed in Poland not as a success for U.S. clandestine intelligence operations during the Cold War,[64] but as an achievement of the Polish people.[65] Such ownership by the population is not only a clear sign of a successful operation in support of a resistance; it is the gold standard. "Complete success," T.E. Lawrence wrote, "is when [they] forget your strangeness and speak naturally before you, counting you as one of themselves."[66] The same can be said about the interaction between the narratives of the people and those presented by the special operator; they should interact and flow together as a natural, logical, and uninterrupted stream of history.

It is important to remember that the population is the protagonist in its own story. Any American intervention casts U.S. forces in what is inevitably (and even preferably) a bit part or minor supporting role in the story of their own society. The more U.S. strategic communications can frame mission success as a uniquely local achievement, as opposed to an American one, the more effectively the special operator will be able to meld into the human environment and attain mission objectives. The stories written by the population itself are best suited to this end, as they are implicitly embraced from the start. If these stories are ignored, the narrative built by the special operator will sound alien and contrived, making it void of potential for mobilization. This principle is likewise essential in FID, where a sense of American or Western ownership over the outcomes of a conflict can unintentionally imply ownership or cooptation of the host government, undermining their legitimacy in the eyes of the people who, in a FID context, need to feel that the government belongs to them.

In conclusion, T.E. Lawrence was right: effective operations require the special operator to have an intimate knowledge of the society, acquired through long-term, on-the-ground experience, and reinforced with education and strong connections to academic resources. In other words, we should strive to make the special operator an expert on cultural narratives, and as adept at perceiving and using them as field stripping an M16. To achieve this, four things are essential:

■ The special operator's training and education must be sufficient to understand and engage the problem of narratives.

■ The special operator must master the language, idiom, and nuance of the society in the area of operations through immersion as much as possible.

■ The special operator must have academic expertise at his disposal. Just as infantry soldiers can call in artillery and air strikes from a distance, the special operator should be able to call on the academic "fire-base" to leverage mission-critical expertise on the nuance and handling of targeted regional narratives. Akin to a five-paragraph field order, this resource would need to be accessible on short notice.

■ The special operator should discover and amplify existing voices that have rapport among the target audience and are already arguing for narratives aligned with mission objectives. Strategic communications should emulate those messages, and the special operator should avoid any actions that would undermine their credibility. When possible, this approach should be favored in information operations over the creation of new narratives.

Russian operations and propaganda in support of separatists in eastern Ukraine through 2014 and 2015 flourished in large part because much of the target population shared their heritage, story, and culture, as they were also post-Soviet, Russian-speaking, and Russian Orthodox. Vladimir Putin's argument that ethnic Russian populations in Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk are "compatriots" and citizens separated from their homeland by the historical peculiarities and technicalities of the Soviet collapse rang true with many communities.[67] Their ethno-linguistic grievances with cultural policies out of Kiev are longstanding[68] and contentious.[69] U.S. Special Operation Forces, on the other hand, are not afforded these luxuries. American culture and assumptions are not present in any area of operations to which they will be deployed. Therefore, members of the SOF community must be students, immersed in experience and knowledge of not only the people in their area of operations, but also the narratives that translate the needs of the people into motivation for action.[70] This is an uphill battle, but that is why U.S. SOF are "carefully selected, well trained, and well led."[71] They have to be the best there is at what they do. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] The opinions in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory or its sponsors. The author would like to thank his colleagues Dr. Robert Leonhard, William Riggs and Lesa McComas for their insights and feedback on drafts of this article.

[2] "SOF Truths," United States Special Operations Command, accessed June 28, 2014, <http://www.socom.mil/Pages/SOFTruths.aspx>.

[3] Another definition of human factors is "the totality of the physical, cultural, psychological, and social environments that influence human behavior to the extent that the success of any military operation or campaign depends on the application of unique capabilities that are designed to influence, fight, and win in the population-centric conflicts" MAJ James F. Razuri, "Harnessing the Human Domain in Warfare," 26th Annual SO/LIC Symposium & Exhibition (January 26-28, 2015), <http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2015SOLIC/HumanDomainFinalEdits.

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[4] *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies*, Second Edition, ed. Nathan Bos (Fort Bragg: The United States Army Special Operations Command, 2013), 367.

[5] "Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow an occupying power or government by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area." Mark Grdovic, "Developing a Common Understanding of Unconventional Warfare," *Joint Force Quarterly* 57, 2nd quarter (2010): 136.

[6] "Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security." U.S. Department of the Army, FM 3-24: Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies (Washington, DC: Headquarters of the Department of the Army, May 2014), Glossary-3.

[7] This use of the word "narrative" is distinct from that used in some doctrine as the "overarching expression of the context and desired results" of a mission, and should be understood in reference to the subservient doctrinal ideas of "theme" and "message" as the concepts and products directly engaged with foreign publics. Theme is the "unifying idea(s) or intention(s) that supports the narrative and is/are designed to provide guidance and continuity for messaging and related products." Message is "a tailored communication directed at a specific public, aligned with a specific theme, in support of a specific objective." U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JDN 2-13: Commander's Communication Synchronization (December 16, 2013), III-9.

[8] "Military information support operations (MISO) are planned to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives." U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-05: Special Operations (July 16, 2014), xi.

[9] This article uses "strategic communications" as a blanket term to include MISO. "Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power." U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (January 15, 2016), 226.

[10] Defined as "a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population[s]." FM 3-24, Glossary-3.

[11] Ibid, 4-3.

[12] Ibid, 4-4.

[13] Ibid, 4-14.

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[15] FM 3-24, 4-14.

[16] FM 3-24 defines ideology as "the integrated assertions, theories, and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program." Ibid, 4-9.

[17] Ibid, 4-14.

[18] Ibid, 4-3.

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Photos

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"The SOTF leader calmly replaced the cover on the hole and replied, 'President Bush sends his regards.'"

Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces

Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence

BY JASON WESBROCK, GLENN HARNED, AND PRESTON PLOUS

> *"The partnership between conventional and special operations forces is stronger than ever."* [1]
>
> - Honorable Michael D. Lumpkin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for
> Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, March 18, 2015

In mid-2003, then Major General Ray Odierno, commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division (ID), had a short meeting with incoming and outgoing special operations leadership. The topic: how to capture Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator who had slipped out of Baghdad prior to the coalition conquering the city. Intelligence sources of the 4th ID scoured the areas around Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, gathering information but not developing any solid leads. The staff proposed another approach: Operation Red Dawn, a combined special operations forces (SOF) and conventional forces (CF) intelligence and direct action effort to find and capture Hussein. The SOF-CF team developed an intelligence collection strategy that focused on five families with ties to Hussein, rapidly narrowing the search to the deposed leader's trusted confidants and family members. Relying on SOF network-mapping capabilities and direct action skills integrated with 4th ID intelligence processing and mobility assets, the SOF-CF team jointly conducted raids, interrogations, and rapid analysis that led to one key individual with direct connections to Hussein. On the evening of December 13, 2003, the 4th ID's 1st Brigade Combat Team joined with SOF

Colonel Jason Wesbrock, USA, was Assessment Branch Chief of the Joint Staff Office of Irregular Warfare (J7). Mr. Glenn Harned and Mr. Preston Plous are the co-authors of the 2015 SOF-CF Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence Report for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

to raid a small farm on the outskirts of Tikrit, eventually discovering a small "spider hole." When the troops pulled the cover off the spider hole, a haggard-looking bearded man raised his hands and said, "I am Saddam Hussein. I am the President of Iraq, and I am willing to negotiate." The SOF leader calmly replaced the cover on the hole and replied, "President Bush sends his regards."[2]

The SOF-CF integration, interoperability, and interdependence (I-3) demonstrated during Operation *Red Dawn* was born out of

the manual still described special operations as geographically separate from conventional operations. In this era of Air Land Battle, SOF and CF deconflicted their activities in time and space, and executed their missions independently of one another. As the Global War on Terrorism progressed, both forces found themselves operating in close proximity, increasingly dependent on each other for mutual support, but without mechanisms to operate together effectively.[3] Initially, the joint force faced several I-3 challenges such as incompatible communications, inefficient command and control, and unfamiliarity with the tactics,

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Defining SOF-CF Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence

Integration – The arrangement of CF and SOF and their actions to create a force that operates by engaging as a whole.

Interoperability – The ability of SOF and CF systems, units, and forces to operate in the execution of assigned tasks.

Interdependence – The purposeful reliance by CF and SOF on each other's capabilities to maximize the complementary and reinforcing effects of both.

Source: Joint Publication 3-05.1, "Unconventional Warfare," September 15, 2015, pages I-12-13.

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necessity, much like in the opening days of Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan. U.S. forces were not always open to this sort of synergy, but the last 15 years of conflict have changed the operational paradigm. Before the attacks of September 11, 2001, SOF and CF normally worked in separate areas of operation as a matter of doctrine. The 1986 edition of Army Field Manual 100-05, *Operations*, limited discussion of SOF operations to actions deep in enemy territory, working with indigenous forces, and performing deep reconnaissance, strikes, and raids. The 1993 version of

techniques, and procedures of each. The joint force has improved significantly since 2001. It has honed the capability to work well together in large-scale military operations, such as in Afghanistan, where they conducted village stability operations and built the Afghan local police.[4] In both Iraq and Afghanistan, SOF liaison elements and intelligence-operations fusion cells proved vital to synchronizing SOF and CF operations and increasing mission effectiveness. By becoming more interoperable, integrating their operations, and relying on interdependence for mutual support, SOF and

CF increased mission success with fewer resources. A solid foundation for maintaining SOF-CF I-3 at an adequate level exists. This foundation, however, is fragile, and it is dependent on adequate and enduring investments in training and readiness.[5] Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey recognized this problem and in 2013 directed a study to identify ways to institutionalize and enhance SOF-CF I-3. The study team interviewed more than 70 leaders in the Department of Defense (DOD), including service chiefs and combatant commanders. The general consensus was that SOF-CF I-3 has never been better, but a deliberate effort is necessary to preserve these gains.[6] Without such an effort, the joint force will need to reinvent today's I-3 processes at the expense of blood and treasure. This article highlights three major areas that require further effort: the SOF-CF I-3 operational construct, command and control relationships, and the baselining of SOF-CF I-3 as an enduring requirement.

Operational Construct

"Fundamentally, a SOF commander conducting CT [counterterrorism] or C-VEO [counter- violent extremist organizations] needs a different decision matrix than a conventional commander focused on maneuver warfare and seizing terrain."[7]– Major General James Linder, commander, Special Operations Command Africa, December 12, 2015

One cause of friction between SOF and CF at the outset of operations *Enduring Freedom* and *Iraqi Freedom* stemmed from differing

Figure 1. Current Joint Operation Plan Phasing Model[8]
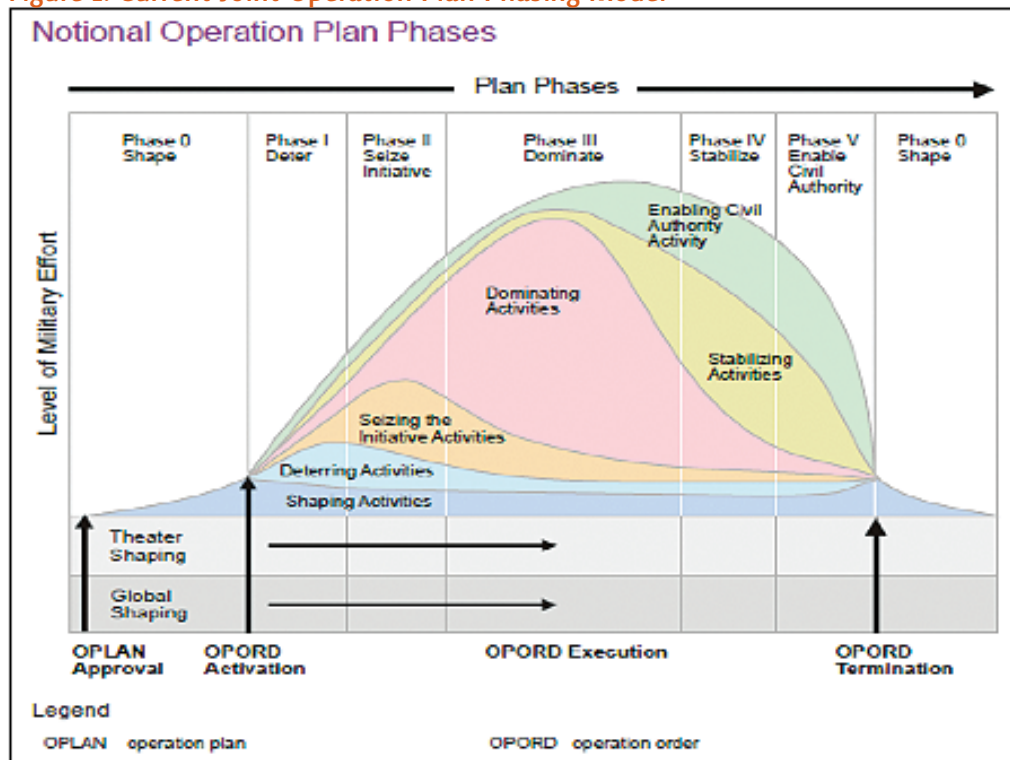
views on how to design, plan, and execute operations and campaigns. The Joint Publication 5.0 model for "enemy-centric" campaigning is appropriate for major combat operations, but may generate sub-optimal outcomes in a "population-centric" operational environment. SOF views campaign design differently from the six-phase model in joint doctrine depicted above.[9] From the SOF perspective, this phasing model focuses on achieving operational military end-states, not strategic civil-military outcomes.

The Joint Staff did not intend for this model to be a prescriptive template for joint operations, but it has become that in practice. Many believe this model emphasizes defeating an enemy armed force at the expense of activities that secure the victory and achieve a strategic outcome favorable to U.S. interests. This difference between SOF and CF views of campaigning can hamper integration from the start of an operation if components of the joint force do not agree on how a campaign should be designed. The Strategic Landpower Task Force initiated the "Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning" (JCIC) that addresses this gap, and ongoing revisions to joint doctrine provide opportunities for change.[10] For example, the JCIC places new emphasis on orienting joint campaigns on political outcomes—not just military success and ending military operations, multiple forms of national power working in unison to achieve those political outcomes, and the long-term post-combat consolidation of military success to establish the preconditions for achieving strategic success. The current revision draft of Joint Publication 5.0 "Joint Operation Planning" presents alternative operation design options, and does not presently contain the phasing model illustration shown above.[11] Additionally,

U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) is developing special operations campaigning doctrine to guide both SOF operational art and operational design.[12] SOF-CF integration should become more natural once each understands the others' preferred operational constructs.

The joint force is taking steps to address the need for both traditional and alternative campaign designs that speak to differences between enemy-centric and population-centric approaches. SOCOM is leading an effort to produce and implement a Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations (JC HAMO), which details the capabilities needed to engage with relevant actors, groups, and populations across the range of military operations. This concept arose from a conversation between General James Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Joseph Votel, the commander of SOCOM, and General Raymond Odierno, the Army Chief of Staff, concerning challenges to the joint force's ability to operate effectively in population-centric environments. The U.S. Army has adopted "Engagement" as a seventh warfighting function, citing many of the same population-centric requirements as the JC HAMO. Then Army Chief of Staff General Odierno said he believes this new function will lead to greater SOF-CF integration in Army professional military education. He expressed his vision of "a global network of SOF and CF capabilities operating in the human domain," but added an entity in the "joint world" is necessary to shepherd the development of such a network.[13]

SOF and CF routinely employ military engagement capabilities[14] outside designated combat zones, like training and advising indigenous security forces, and operating differently

than they would in a combat zone. As such, the degree of integration also differs in this "Chief of Mission environment,"[15] mostly in how SOF and CF coordinate resources. While joint force commanders (JFCs) facilitate SOF-CF I-3 in designated combat zones, no equivalent JFC exists below the geographic combatant command or regional joint task force (JTF) level outside a joint operational area. Geographic combatant commands and joint task forces normally are not involved in the day-to-day integration of activities at the country level. During the Cold War, commanders of joint military assistance and advisory groups functioned as country-level JFCs and exercised authority over all U.S. military forces and activities in the country. Commanders of today's security cooperation organizations generally do not exercise operational or tactical control of in-country U.S. forces, and senior defense officials are not empowered to fill the void. Joint forces miss opportunities for greater synergy when elements conduct in-country activities separately.

Doctrine provides the intellectual foundation for joint organization, training, and education. SOCOM has made progress toward mutual understanding of best practices for SOF operations. For example, SOCOM is now a voting member of the Joint Doctrine Development Community, and serves as the lead agent for six joint publications.[16] SOCOM revised special operations doctrine to enable better understanding by a wider DOD audience.[17] While progress continues, doctrinal gaps remain. The joint force lacks sufficient doctrine that describes how SOF and CF integrate, interoperate, and depend on each other at the operational level. Joint doctrine should articulate integrated campaign design and planning, battlespace ownership and

management, CF administrative and logistic support of SOF, and command relationships.

Command and Control (C2) Relationships

"Command and control is an art, not a science. It is very personality dependent."[18] –General Joseph Votel, commander, SOCOM, December 19, 2014

On March 2, 2002, U.S. and Afghan forces conducted Operation ANACONDA to dislodge Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other extremist elements from the Shahikot Valley. Coalition forces encountered a much larger number of enemy than anticipated, and the ensuing battle resulted in the loss of eight U.S. service members. A number of C2 issues contributed to inefficient execution, including the transfer of operational control (OPCON) from the Joint Special Operations Task Forces (JSOTFs) to the conventional JTF despite a special operations/indigenous forces main effort, national and theater SOF operating under separate chains of command, and the failure to include the Joint Force Air Component in the planning process until two days before the operation.

Improper or confusing command relationships can compromise a mission; conversely, effective C2 relationships can achieve unity of effort. For SOF, the JSOTFs have proven their worth during deployments throughout the last 15 years, forming the basis for SOF C2 at the tactical level. JSOTFs usually are built around the core of a U.S. Army Special Forces Group, commanded by a

colonel. Because SOF had no operational level headquarters below the theater special operations commands, JSOTFs often were pressed into service as operational-level C2 structures. They often, however, lacked the staff, experience, and rank structure to function well at the operational level. At times, this resulted in the misuse of SOF and a lack of synergy between SOF and CF. When it became evident that SOF needed a more robust C2 capability in Afghanistan, SOCOM established Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A), in 2011 as a general/flag officer command to exercise OPCON of both national and theater SOF, and to facilitate the operational level integration of SOF and CF actions. A second SOJTF now performs similar functions in Iraq, but both remain temporary organizations. Recognizing the need for a permanent structure, the Army converted the First Special Forces Command Headquarters into a deployable 2-star organization that can serve as the core of a SOJTF. This new organization provides an operational level capability, but its existence does not mean a SOJTF will always command special operators and their CF partners, even when SOF are the main effort.

Confusion and disagreement often arises regarding who should retain OPCON of SOF.[19] This disagreement causes uncertainty as to where I-3 efforts should occur and where processes should be institutionalized. Services that develop and field JTF-capable headquarters[20] often believe the JFC should exercise OPCON over all subordinate forces in order to maintain unity of command. From the SOF perspective, command relationships must be purposeful. As one SOF general officer stated, "Integration does not mean CF absorbing SOF. Sometimes unity of effort is just as good as, or

better than, unity of command."[21] SOCOM believes theater special operations commands (TSOCs) should retain OPCON of SOF, allowing the TSOCs to approve mission and task organization changes, as well as reallocate SOF assets to support higher-priority tasks. SOCOM believes JFCs should exercise tactical control (TACON) of SOF, allowing them to direct and control SOF actions within the JFC's operational area. This "OPCON versus TACON" argument remains unresolved; it is perhaps so mission-dependent that it should remain open.

Many in the conventional force question whether unity of effort and supported/supporting command relationships are adequate for unified action. This includes giving SOF OPCON or TACON over CF assets. While cases in which CF units are attached to a SOF command do exist, as in village stability operations, a general resistance to SOF exercising OPCON or TACON over CF remains.[22] The nature of CF and SOF command structures contributes to this resistance. SOF C2 tends to be very lean, agile, and flexible, without much excess capacity. CF C2 tends to be robust, capable, and resilient, but it is also slower to respond to changing situations. According to one senior CF leader who recently returned from Afghanistan, this results in some SOF leaders viewing the CF as too slow; conversely, some CF leaders view SOF as "cowboys" who are incapable of true joint C2. Absent a trusted personal relationship, these perceptions inhibit the assignment of units to each other's formations, hampering and complicating cooperation.

Every senior leader interviewed for the Chairman's SOF-CF I-3 study stressed the importance of personal relationships.[23] Whether forged in battle or formed through

interactions during training and education, these longstanding connections reduced resistence toward integration and enhanced cooperation. U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps leaders were particularly impressed with the positive effects trusted relationships had on enhancing communication and leveraging each other's capabilities. Senior leaders also understand that as combat operations decrease, the opportunities for developing trusted relationships will decrease as well unless the services and combatant commands are proactive in developing and supporting them in other venues.

Liaison elements help mitigate the lack of trusted relationships, and a general consensus exists that SOF liaison elements at CF headquarters play a critical role in SOF-CF I-3.[24] Since 2001, the number and size of SOF liaison elements expanded from a few personnel in key areas to encompass CF organizations and interagency partners. These SOF liaison elements facilitate communication, maintain trust, and bolster relationships. While CF liaison elements to SOF headquarters also play a role, many participants thought SOF liaison components in CF organizations provide adequate communication and kept both headquarters informed of the other's operations. Despite their utility, liaison officer positions often are not authorized on manning documents, and they may become the first positions to be cut as personnel authorizations decrease.

Baselining SOF-CF I-3

"We cannot allow the pre-9/11 gaps between SOF and conventional forces to re-emerge."[25] –General Mark Milley, commander, Army Forces Command, March 30, 2015

In May 2011, elements of the 82nd Airborne Division deployed as Task Force One Panther to support Combined/Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) and execute village stability operations in Regional Command–North. Task Force One Panther augmented elements of the 1st and 5th Special Forces Groups and SEAL Team 7. SOF and CF leveraged each other's strengths and worked together so well that the commander of CJSOTF-A designated Task Force One Panther as a Special Operations Task Force (SOTF). This SOTF assumed responsibility for village stability operations across Regional Command–North and exercised TACON of attached SOF elements. SOF C2 assets were freed up to accomplish other tasks, and Task Force One Panther was fully capable of exercising TACON of SOF. SOF were not "chopped" to the 82nd Airborne Division; rather, Task Force One Panther became a SOF C2 element under the CJSOTF-A.

Understanding each other's operational context and solving C2 issues will gain the joint force nothing if institutional knowledge and experience for SOF-CF I-3 disappears. Baselining integration as an enduring requirement entails education, establishing habitual training relationships, and creating standards and measures. Ideally, the joint force should operate as seamlessly as Task Force One Panther in the above example. For those elements of the joint force not committed to contingency operations, joint training and readiness funds are critical to maintaining a baseline capability. The Joint National Training Capability (JNTC) is an Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense-funded program that enhances integrated training by adding service, combatant command, and combat support enablers to the training environment. JNTC

programs have significant positive impact, and the programs provide venues for mitigating incompatibilities between SOF and CF and reduce the difficulty of synchronizing service force generation and training cycles. The SOF-CF relationship during training has improved tremendously over the last decade.

Joint National Training Capability programs allow SOF and CF to train together on a regular basis—something that should also occur outside the JNTC framework. Habitual training relationships build confidence, personal connections, and trust.[26] They also help resolve C2 difficulties before units deploy under the same JFC.[27] Habitual training relationships enhance effectiveness and are a high priority for the geographic combatant commands. General Votel, while commander of SOCOM, cited three successful examples: establishing habitual relationships between

SOF and the Army's regionally aligned forces in U.S. Africa Command; establishing Special Operations Command-Forward East, West, and South in Africa; and SOCOM aligning SOF to the Pacific Pathways exercise series.[28] The challenge is convincing the services to commit limited funds and resources to create and maintain habitual training relationships with SOF units while considering the tempo of SOF operations.[29] JNTC funding has been cut significantly since 2011, and the services have limited funding to make up the difference. Restoring JNTC funding would better enable the services to train in a complex joint environment and incorporate SOF-CF I-3. Absent adequate funding, the services will prioritize exercise requirements directly related to their core missions.

Professional military education is also vital to maintaining SOF-CF integration. The

Pacific Pathways 2014, pictured above, represented a prime opportunity for SOF and CF forces to gain experiences training both together and with partner forces.

current joint and service curricula regarding SOF-CF I-3 is insufficient. While it contains SOF learning objectives, SOF-CF I-3 often is taught only in SOF elective courses. Several flag officers expressed concern that professional military education institutions teach SOF education at the comprehension level of learning without requiring students to apply that knowledge to solve I-3 issues in wargames or exercises. This leads to an incomplete understanding of SOF-CF synergy. To rectify this problem, the Joint Staff J7 is identifying relevant universal joint tasks to enable joint learning areas and objectives. More emphasis is required to incorporate SOF-CF integration into core curricula at the application level of learning.[30] Without specific requirements for SOF-CF integration, the subject will not compete favorably for scarce classroom and exercise time.

A lack of specific integration requirements also means a dearth of metrics. The DOD lacks the ability to measure the current level of SOF-CF I-3 and to set targets for preserving or enhancing institutionalization. Metrics are difficult because integration is not easily quantifiable, and circumstances vary as situations change. Despite being difficult to quantify, both senior leadership and subject matter experts proposed several ways to measure I-3: the degree of integration of SOF-CF tasks into professional military education, training events, and exercises; the number of SOF personnel assigned to predominantly CF staffs and command billets (and vice versa); the participation rates in training events and exercises; and mission success. To aid in developing metrics, SOCOM and the Joint Staff J7 currently are leading an effort to identify or create relevant universal joint tasks and measures that

will assist in assessing the adequacy of SOF-CF I-3 within the joint force.

Conclusion

"Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces partners must continue to institutionalize integration, interdependence, and interoperability."[31]
–General Joseph Votel, commander, SOCOM, January 27, 2015

SOF-CF I-3 is the glue that holds these two elements of the joint force together, making it more effective and efficient in nearly any situation. This integration has never been more effective, but institutionalization has not kept pace. Failure to institutionalize I-3 will create significant challenges for the future joint force.

The DOD has not completely lost the initiative, and unique processes are not required to preserve the integration developed during the past 15 years. DOD leadership can mitigate many of the institutionalization shortfalls by changing some of the ways the department trains, educates, and resources the joint force. In this context, the services endorsed implementation of 23 recommendations from the SOF-CF I-3 Study Report, several of which are already being put into practice. For example, SOF-CF I-3 is now defined in Joint Publication 3.05-1 "Unconventional Warfare;" the Joint Staff J7, in concert with SOCOM, is identifying and/or developing appropriate Universal Joint Tasks; and the Office of the Secretary of Defense is taking steps to identify funding levels needed to preserve SOF-CF I-3 gains during joint exercises.

The state of SOF-CF I-3 is as dynamic as the operational environment. The roles of SOF

and CF will continue to evolve as the joint force adapts to the changing operational environment. While the joint force stands at a time of unprecedented success in integrating SOF and CF, we will pay a heavy price in blood and treasure if we fail to preserve this progress. **PRISM**

Notes

1   Honorable Michael D. Lumpkin. Statement Before the 114th Congress Armed Services Committee, 18 March 2015, page 6, available at: http://docs.house.gov/meetings/as/as26/20150318/103157/hmtg-114-as26-wstate-lumpkinm-20150318.pdf

2   USAICoE Command History Office, "Operation RED DAWN nets Saddam Hussein," US Army, December 6, 2013, available at <https://www.army.mil/article/116559/Operation_RED_DAWN_nets_Saddam_Hussein/>.

3   SOCOM Publication 3-33, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Conventional Forces and Special Operations Forces Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence*, (Air-Land-Sea Application Center, March 2014). Note: SOCOM designated this publication as SOCOM Publication 3-33, and the Services assigned their own numbers to it.

4   Major William Canda III (USA), "Tactical Special Operations and Conventional Force Interdependence: The Future of Land Force Development" (Master's thesis, United States Military Academy, 2013), 7-8.

5   For the purposes of this article, an enduring requirement is one that requires resourcing beyond the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP). Containing the Soviets during the Cold War was an enduring requirement, and the DoD programmed money as such.

6   Joint Staff J7 Office of Irregular Warfare, "Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence Report," April 2015.

7   MG James Linder, Interview with the authors, 12 December 2015

8   Joint Publication 5-0, "*Joint Operation Planning*," (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, August 11, 2011), p. III-39, Figure III-16.

9   Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, August 11, 2011).

10   The revision of JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*" (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, August 11, 2011); JP 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, July 16, 2014); JP 3-33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters* (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, July 30, 2012); and JP 5-0, Joint Operation Planning (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, August 11, 2011).

11   Joint Publication 5-0 *Joint Operation Planning* Revision Draft (Washington DC, The Joint Staff, 14 June 2016)

12   While there is no SOCOM doctrine, USASOC created its own campaign planning guidance. See: USASOC. "Special Operations Forces Campaign Planner's Handbook of Operational Art and Design (Version 2.0)." US Army. September 16, 2014.

13   General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff, United States Army. Interview with the authors, 31 March 2015

14   Joint Publication 1-02 defines military engagement as, "Routine contact and interaction between individuals or elements of the Armed Forces of the United States and those of another nation's armed forces, or foreign and domestic civilian authorities or agencies to build trust and confidence, share information, coordinate mutual activities, and maintain influence." See: JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, updated February 15, 2016).

15   A "Chief of Mission" environment is one outside designated theaters of armed combat, where the Chief of Mission has final authority over US government activities. A "Title 10" environment

usually refers to a designated theater of armed combat, where the Geographic combatant command or joint force Commander has authority.

[16] SOCOM has the lead for Joint Publications 3-05, "Special Operations;" 3-05.1, "Unconventional Warfare;" 3-13.2, "Military Information Support Operations;" 3-22, "Foreign Internal Defense;"3-26, "Counterterrorism;" and 3-57, "Civil-Military Operations."

[17] JP 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, July 16, 2014), III-4 to III-5.

[18] General Joseph Votel. Interview with the authors, 19 December 2014

[19] Operational control (OPCON) is "The authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission." Tactical control is "The authority over forces that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned."

[20] A JTF-capable HQ is one that can command and control a major operation with both partner nation and joint force components. This is notionally thought of as a 2-star HQ, equivalent to an Army/USMC Division or a Numbered Air Force, although the actual rank of the commander is dependent on the situation.

[21] Interview with the authors, granted under non-attribution, 2015

[22] Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (OASD SO/LIC) and SOCOM, "Special Operations Forces (SOF) Command and Control (C2) Study: Revised Final Report," Department of Defense, July 6, 2009, 16.

[23] Joint Staff J7 Office of Irregular Warfare, "Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence Report," April 2015.

[24] These elements include the Special Operations Liaison Elements inside Air Operations Centers, the Special Operations Forces Liaison Elements with Marine Expeditionary Units, and the Special Operations Command and Control Elements employed across the joint force.

[25] General Mark Milley. Interview with the authors, 30 March 2015

[26] Habitual training relationships are relationships between units or types of units that enable them to conduct pre-deployment training together on a regular basis, in preparation for working together during operational missions.

[27] ALSA Multi-Service Pub 3-33 states „CF and SOF units should meet and integrate early to foster the relationship, instill the 'one team, one fight' mentality, understand each other's staff planning procedures, and defuse any misconceptions or friction points. If at all possible, units should attend training events together, at training centers or as part of joint exercises." (pg. 21).

[29] Joint Staff J7 Office of Irregular Warfare, "Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence Report," April 2015.

[29] SOCOM is prohibited by law from spending "SOF-specific" Major Force Program-11 money to support CF training.

[30] OASD SO/LIC, "Irregular Warfare Education Study," (Washington, DC: September 20, 2013), 29.

[31] General Joseph Votel. Remarks to the National Defense Industrial Association's SO/LIC Symposium, 27 January 2015
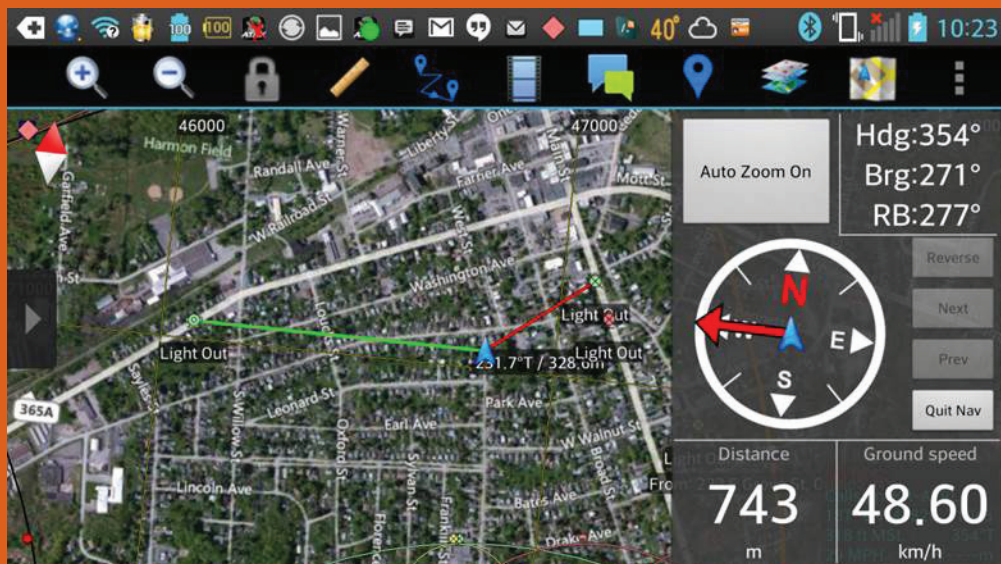
A screencapture of the Android Tactical Assault Kit app used by U.S. and Iraqi Special Forces to communicate, maintain and enhance situational awareness, and call for fire support.

Reaching Forward in the War against the Islamic State

BY CHRISTOPHER THIELENHAUS, PAT TRAEGER, AND ERIC ROLES

Just like any other night...

The Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) Ground Force Commander surveys the farmland in front of him. His unit of ISOF soldiers has just captured two ISIL Commanders (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) at a house 50 kilometers from Baghdad—far enough away to put this unit in danger of being overrun if ISIL fighters respond quickly. He knows that his enemies must have received the call to arms only minutes ago, and are on the way to his location.

He commands his soldiers to be prepared for contact at any moment while he pulls out his cell phone. As cell phones go, this is a good one. He holds one of the newest Samsung Galaxy Note phones, but it is more than just a phone for this Commander—his device is securely linked back to U.S. special operations advisors. He quickly pulls up the MyTrax application and types out a quick message to his Operations Center: "Jackpot," he has captured his high value targets for this mission. As soon as he hits "send," he hears the staccato pop of gunfire to his left.

ISIL has arrived with what sounds like at least 20 fighters. Taking cover with his phone still in his hand, he taps a location for the enemy force and hits "share." An enemy infantry icon pops onto the screen on his phone, as well as every other connected phone that his subordinate leaders are carrying. The operations center receives this icon too, and the American special forces soldiers advising this mission in Baghdad start preparing for a close air support request. The Iraqi

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Commander taps the screen on his phone again to bring up the 9-line air support request form, quickly entering the data for the enemy force and sending it immediately to his American advisors in the operations center. Fifteen minutes later, a Coalition F-16 arrives and drops multiple bombs directly on the target—all remotely and thoroughly coordinated by Coalition special operations advisors and fires elements. With the brief respite, the Iraqi Commander gathers his force, packs up his detainees, and returns to Baghdad before more ISIL fighters can arrive. His mission is a success.

Only 10 years ago, this brief vignette would have been consigned to the pages of science fiction or futurist military thrillers, but it is now the reality on the ground in Iraq. Similar scenarios play out every week with U.S.- and Coalition-advised ISOF troops taking the lead in combat operations using cellular communications systems that link them back to their Coalition advisors. This ability to "reach forward" by Coalition special operations forces (SOF) personnel represents a true evolution in the ability of U.S. and Coalition special operations advisors to be true force multipliers on the 21st century battlefield. Currently, this technology is in prototype phase in Iraq, but the current spate of low intensity conflicts makes this type of capability more important than ever.[1] The annually published Army Operating Concept describes an increasing dependence upon Special Warfare to contest irregular threats in the current resource and policy constrained environment.[2] The application of this technology increases U.S. SOF ability to respond to these threats. Like many technological achievements in the last 100 years, however, this requirement originated from military crisis: the relentless march of ISIL in the summer of 2014.[3]

Day Donaldson

 In 2014, ISIL caught the world surprise, taking over large swaths of land in Iraq and Syria in an attempt to form a caliphate.

An Inauspicious Start

In June 2014 the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had just started its rampage across the northern and western provinces of Iraq. Iraqi forces were falling back on every front, yielding more and more ground to ISIL as it relentlessly marched to Baghdad. In this chaotic situation, a small special operations element that included less than 50 U.S. Army special forces soldiers deployed to Baghdad International Airport to support the U.S. embassy in the event of crisis escalation. Arriving on the ground, this force quickly realized the volatility of the environment and challenges in supporting the U.S. embassy, and immediately opened dialogue with their former ISOF partners to see what effects they could have to help slow the ISIL advance. Unlike their Iraqi conventional force brethren, the ISOF units were still mostly intact and regularly carrying out effective combat operations. ISOF at this time were clearly displaying the fruits of 10 years of U.S. special forces training and partnership, resulting in a professional, motivated, and battle-tested Iraqi special operations unit. Although low on personnel and equipment, the long relationship between ISOF and U.S. special operations had yielded a command climate within ISOF that valued mission success, efficiency, and the innovative use of technology to achieve unit objectives. ISOF Commanders desperately wanted the assistance, both technical and tactical, that U.S. special forces could bring, but U.S. policy at that time limited U.S. forces involvement in the fight against ISIL. The special forces soldiers on the ground would have to be creative.

From this situation, the concept of "Remote Advise and Assist" (RAA) was born.

The special forces soldiers realized that an "advise and assist" effort was necessary, but would only be possible by scaling up their forward reach with their partners; this could only be done remotely given the U.S. policies that restricted them from directly accompanying ISOF soldiers into combat. Incidentally, ISOF units already used several Android applications—Offline Maps, Google Earth, and Viber, to name a few—which allowed them to bring tablets and phones on their operations to help communicate, conduct reconnaissance and targeting, track their movements, and better navigate the old and complex road networks in the areas surrounding Baghdad. As a result, ISOF leadership was very well versed in using technology, especially cell phones, to assist both their planning and execution.

Fortunately, the special forces soldiers that had arrived in country were already trained in an Android cell phone program developed by the U.S. Government called "ATAK," short for "Android Tactical Assault Kit."[4] This program allows an android phone user to maintain collective situational awareness, communicate and coordinate with other users, quickly tap out commands, text messages, enemy/friendly locations, and even full 9-line calls for fire. It is an exceptionally powerful and user-friendly program that is rapidly evolving within the U.S. military, and specifically within the U.S. Special Operations Command. With this knowledge, the special forces soldiers quickly realized that a program like ATAK combined with the existing technical competence of the ISOF could yield significant battlefield results.

Stemming from this realization, the special forces Troop Commander in Iraq contacted the Special Operations Command, Central (SOCCENT) J3 Operations Technology Directorate with a request to fill an immediate

operational need for Remote Advise and Assist kits. In the meantime, the special forces soldiers in Baghdad assembled ad hoc kits using U.S., ISOF, and locally procured components. By using the very limited domestic terrestrial cellular networks, and by providing an alternate means of tracking with Frontier iridium GPS trackers that were linked into the system, these ad hoc kits provided an initial Remote Advise and Assist capability that enabled the special forces advisors to track, communicate, and share limited data with ISOF partners. The ad hoc capability greatly increased ISOF confidence during operations, as U.S. advisors were able to provide some measure of support to ISOF operations. Application of this ad hoc capability quickly resulted in the capture of several high-value ISIL targets.

Within 90 days of the request from Iraq, the SOCCENT J3 Operations Technology Directorate was able to prototype several "Virtual Accompany Kits" from off-the-shelf technology and deploy the kits to Iraq. The prototype kits used Samsung cell phones pre-loaded with the software program MyTrax, a multinational, releasable, International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) compliant version of ATAK. The phones worked on the Iraqi domestic cell phone network, but these kits also securely linked the forward cell phones with a portable Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN) satellite communications node, which is a standard issue piece of computer equipment that creates a local computer network for a special operations detachment. The BGAN would then transport data from the cell phones back to an operations center even when the phones were in austere areas out of Iraqi domestic cellular range. Armed with this system, and shortly after receiving authorization to conduct kinetic strikes in support of

Iraqi forces, the special forces soldiers and ISOF units went to work. The first several operational employments of "virtual accompany kit" –enabled, U.S.-advised ISOF operations resulted in hundreds of ISIL enemies killed from coalition airstrikes. To date, the number of enemies killed from Remote Advise and Assist operations has grown into the thousands.

Combined Joint Task Force-Iraq Arrives on the Ground

Fast forward to February 2015: U.S. and Coalition forces have arrived in greater numbers to Iraq, and have partially succeeded in the primary task ordered by the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Commander (the overall Commander in Iraq) which was simply to "stop the bleeding" of Iraqi forces.[5] There is now a demarcated front separating the regions controlled by ISIL and the Iraqi government. The situation is stable enough that U.S. and Coalition forces have set up headquarters at the Baghdad Airport and the U.S. embassy. It is at this time that special operations gets a major upgrade with the arrival of the 1st Special Forces Group, which assumed the role of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Iraq (CJSOTF-I). This new CJSOTF was to take command of the myriad of coalition special operations task forces then operating in Iraq, as well as provide a legitimate planning and fires cell for on-going operations. Shortly after arrival, the fires cell specialists realized that they would not have the authority to deliver aerial ordnance at their level, so they re-prioritized their efforts. All the fires personnel from CJSOTF had been training with the ATAK application for the past year, and were very familiar with its use. Shortly after arriving, they received the briefings on the Remote

Advise and Assist kits and immediately realized that supporting the use of these kits would be their new priority effort.

By the time CJSOTF-I arrived in Iraq, the Remote Advise and Assist kits had been in the hands of the ISOF for over four months. In that short time, their U.S. and Coalition partners had tracked hundreds of sorties flown, missions executed, and thousands of enemies killed as a result of the kits' assistance.[6] The utility of the kits was not in question; they were performing at an extremely high level, to the point that their green force tracking ability was the primary method of battle-tracking being used by the ISOF on the ground in terms of verifying friendly locations when authorizing airstrikes. The CJSOTF-I fires personnel accordingly built a fires cell that could collate all of the information coming in from the kits. This allowed them to establish a common operating picture with far more granularity than what was standard at the time. In the timespan of only a little over a month, the common operating picture produced at CJSOTF-I came to be the most reliable source of information on ISOF partner movement in Iraq, providing a level of clarity that simply could not be reproduced through pure radio, cell phone, iridium tracker, or iridium phone contact with Iraqi partners.

CJSOTF-I paved the way for wide adoption of the Remote Advise and Assist concept by making it a key part of the special operations common operating picture. As operations evolved, such as the Iraqi attack on Tikrit and defense of Anbar, the CJSOTF-I was able to provide timely and relevant positional information to the overall U.S. commander that gave as clear a picture as was possible without American boots on the ground. This ability to better see and understand the Iraqi forces'

situation greatly increased the ability of U.S. forces as a whole to support the Iraqi military. The concept of remotely advising and assisting partner forces had become a key portion of the CJSOTF-I strategy.

The success of the Remote Advise and Assist concept was the result of a multi-pronged effort by U.S. and Coalition special operations personnel to make an impact on the battlefield despite the limitations that they faced. This required creative adaptation of existing technology to fit an operational need. To successfully operate the equipment once it arrived, however, the special operations forces in Iraq had to develop a concept prior to even making a request. It was this concept, and its development process, that ultimately led to success.

The Remote Advise and Assist (RAA) Concept

At their core, the RAA kits are a system of integrated technologies that provide a vastly improved method for interfacing with and supporting a partner force. The current prototypes involve securely connected cellular and satellite communications technology, but the concept is not restricted to this particular construct. This concept structure is deceptively simple, but in execution it is highly technical. ATAK, MyTrax, and derivative programs provide the map technology, user interface, and a collaboration environment with additional military capabilities, such as the ability to text, call for fire, and share iconography among the phones and operations centers. Secure "backhaul" methods (that is, the method of transporting data from the phones to the remotely located operations centers, beyond line of sight) are the most important aspects of the kits. The technologies for all parts of the RAA

kits exist, but are not typically combined in the structure that the SOCCENT J3 Operations Technology Directorate put together in the prototype.

These systems, however, provide a level of clarity in the combined common operating picture that was infeasible with previous technology. With RAA kits, the U.S. advisors are able to communicate and receive immediate, up-to-the-second updates from their partner leaders during missions.

The commercial mobile devices integrated into the RAA nodes allow the leaders to carry the equivalent of an enhanced, user friendly Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) system in the palm of their hands, as opposed to the bulky system that is confined to the passenger seat of military trucks. Similar to the functions that the FBCB2 system provides, ATAK, MyTrax and derivative programs allow users to generate a complete 9-line fires request for either aerial delivery or traditional artillery, all while doing the mathematical computations for the user. Combining this capability with a proficiently trained aerial fires specialist from the partner force leads to an unprecedented ability to deliver and control fire support in a reliable manner. This

U.S. Army

Applications like MyTrax and ATAK are replacing the original communications systems like the Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below FBCB2 computer and display, above in a Humvee.

capability is not confined to the partner force leader. With the current prototypes, the partner force leader is able to have multiple subordinates carry the enabled mobile devices as well, further increasing battlefield clarity.

When introduced to the RAA concept and the components of the kits, a common question among Coalition special operators and commanders is that of information security. While the practice of securely transporting data communications over unclassified and untrusted networks (such as cellular networks) may seem like a new concept to many, this practice is well established and widely executed within the realms of special operations units and among the wider U.S. intelligence apparatus. The information security methods used in the RAA kits comply with the Department of Defense (DOD) and National Security Agency guidance and fall within the theater commander's authority to operate. The primary means of information security are very similar to the methods standard to tactical communications networks used widely within the DOD such as commercial encryption and administrative management of network devices. The RAA nodes are susceptible to the same types of disruption and intrusion that most DOD networks are vulnerable to—particularly radio frequency interference and jamming. In the event that RAA kits or components fall into the hands of enemies or are otherwise compromised, RAA network administrators have the ability to revoke all network access on all devices from the nodes. In some cases, RAA network administrators may be able to remotely operate compromised devices, which in turn may provide exploitation options for Coalition and partner commanders.

A key aspect of the RAA concept is that, while it is a significant enhancement to the special operators' and partner force's ability to command, control, communicate, and integrate, it is not a replacement for a special operator on the ground. In fact, RAA is an enabling concept that is completely dependent upon highly developed relationships and extensive partner force mastery of fundamental military and technical skills. The RAA concept works exceptionally well in Iraq because the ISOF were highly trained throughout a 10-year U.S. investment and combat advisory relationship that is now bearing fruit. Conversely, for a force that has little training and experience, or is learning directly from the participation of U.S. special operations forces, such as a guerilla force in its infancy or a recently created commando unit, the RAA concept is not appropriate for sole, unaccompanied partner use.

In these cases, both the partner force and their accompanying U.S. partners would carry RAA technology on the ground. This construct increases the common operating picture clarity while enhancing the U.S. special operators' ability to directly command and control an advisory mission. In many ways, this is the ideal use of the technology, but there are few places in the world today where U.S. forces have full authorities to participate in combat operations in conjunction with their partners. In areas where the U.S. will assume the risks associated with U.S. special operators accompanying their partner forces, this incredibly powerful and scalable option also mitigates and reduces those myriad risks.

A second key aspect of the RAA concept, however, is that it can apply to a wide variety of potential mission sets that are not direct combat. There are multiple potential scales

and iterations of RAA kits that would be appropriate for different mission sets. For example, a "low visibility" kit can support 3-5 users with a small wireless router that could easily be hidden inside of a vehicle or other power source, while a "high visibility" kit can support more than 100 users and provides a very high quality signal using commercial satellite connective equipment that even works while driving. Hypothetically, a "very high profile" kit could potentially support hundreds of users by establishing a cell phone tower capability using a military balloon to elevate a long-range communications node. Missions for these kits could range from overt information or civil affairs operations, to clandestine low-profile missions, all the way up to major combat operations in support of hundreds or thousands of multinational partnered users. A

limiting factor with these options is cost of the equipment: the highest level RAA prototype currently costs approximately $500,000 and serves more than one hundred users. The cost of a small low signature kit that serves three to five users is approximately $50,000, making it a very viable option for a low cost, high payoff operation. The RAA concept is ultimately limited only by the user's imagination, and can be a critical command and control multiplier in any type of operation where an advising unit needs better integration and communication with a partner force. In this way, the RAA concept supports Department of Defense efforts to better integrate both technology and international partners in line with stated national security objectives.

Staff Sgt. Adam Mancini, U.S. Army

1st Lt. Jared Tomberlin, left, and an interpreter pull security on top of a mountain ridge during a reconnaissance mission near Forward Operating Base Lane in the Zabul province of Afghanistan.

RAA in Support of National Security Objectives

The Department of Defense derivatives of the current National Security Strategy of the United States[7] specifically state that technologies like the RAA concept will be a key aspect of future U.S. conflicts. The Joint Chiefs of Staff September 2012 "Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020," endorsed by the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explicitly states that the future security environment will be characterized foremost by irregular warfare.[8] Additionally, the Army Special Operations Forces Operating Concept and the U.S. Special Operations Command 2020 future force structure concept both emphasize special warfare capability enhancement as one of a myriad of options to combat irregular threats.[9] These sources characterize the future strategic operating environment as persistently unstable with growing irregular threats, reduced U.S. military forces and resources, and constrained policies.

The June 2015 National Military Strategy is, perhaps, the foremost military document that most explicitly identifies technology challenges to the United States. The document emphasizes:

> "Global disorder has significantly increased while our comparative military advantage has begun to erode. We now face multiple, simultaneous security challenges from traditional state actors and transregional networks of sub-state groups – all taking advantage of rapid technological change. Future conflicts will come more rapidly, last longer, and take place on a much more technically challenging battlefield. Success will increasingly depend on how well we enable our network of allies and partners."[10]

This National Military Strategy clearly recognizes the gravity of effects of technology and the required utility of enabling partners to support U.S. national interests.[11] Though all of the cited national security documents clearly state that international partnership is the only way to overcome current challenges, none provide new ways to achieve a requisite scale of partnership. The RAA concept is one method to bridge that gap. It provides the "middle option" that makes special warfare a more viable alternative to solving national security crises.

RAA Research and Way Ahead

Understanding why RAA works and how it could be applied to missions outside of Iraq are the two fundamental subjects driving ongoing research efforts. To this end, the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), supported by Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) and in conjunction with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), is executing a twofold study to examine the ideal conditions that determine successful application of the RAA concept as well as conducting an experiment by inserting and observing the effects of improved prototypes of the equipment into the battlefield. Specifically, the first aspect of this study will examine SOCCENT's recent application of the RAA concept in Iraq, identify conditions for U.S. and partner or surrogate forces that drive success, identify best practices, and catalyze the implementation of the concept and proliferation of requisite skills and equipment among special operators and their partners and surrogates. The second aspect of the study plans

will be an experiment to analyze the utility, scalability, and disproportionate effects of RAA by inserting advanced developments of RAA prototype nodes into active combat, simultaneously supporting SOCCENTs efforts to apply RAA regionally and to fight ISIL.

The study intends to answer three fundamental questions: (1) What are the conditions under which RAA is best utilized by special operators to fight effectively in an ever-increasing number of irregular wars with indigenous or partner nation personnel? (2) What conditions and prerequisites make RAA prone to succeed or fail? (3) What are the fundamental conceptual, physical, and technical frameworks for RAA?

This study is unique: the RAA concept is in active, limited, and ad hoc use on the battlefields of Iraq. However, no systematic research exists about the conditions and mechanisms that enable the concept to be effective. The study will gain atmospherics, technical data, and results of field experimentation directly from operators utilizing the prototype equipment in the field against an active enemy. The resulting yield of information has the potential to be exceptionally valuable, with a possibility of supporting expanded application of RAA. While the scope of the study is limited to the special operations application of RAA prototypes in several separate cases in Iraq, there is a high level of interest throughout the special operations community in this technology, as well as consideration for further application of the RAA concept in many other hot spot areas around the globe.

Conclusion

The RAA concept is not limited to improving partnered operational connectivity. In fact, it provides a breakthrough to address a systemic challenge facing special operations forces writ large. Special operations forces today face a difficult paradox: there is a growing need for scalable options to cope with an increasing number of irregular conflicts coupled with national policy constraints that limit the presence and effects that special operators can have on the ground.[12] The birthplace of the Remote Advise and Assist concept is certainly not the only applicable scenario for this technology. Irregular threats today are growing in scope and scale. RAA could be used to assist the Ukrainian military in combating Russian aggression by providing real time updates on separatist enclaves, battlefield movements, and other applications similar to how ISOF uses the technology against ISIL. For a more intelligence based approach, low visibility kits could accompany intelligence agents as they try to identify Iranian sponsored resistance groups, using the kit's suite of photographic, video, and reporting tools to send updates to a national intelligence center. From a defensive standpoint, the Republic of Korea could use this technology to track and neutralize North Korean clandestine activities below the 38th parallel. These are just a few examples, but they demonstrate the width and breadth of activity possible with this technology.

RAA provides a solution to this paradox by making special warfare a viable option even when direct boots-on-the-ground combat advisory missions are inappropriate or infeasible. The key strength and uniqueness of special warfare is working with and through partners or surrogates. The discreet, precise, scalable, and economic nature of Special Warfare makes it a more attractive option than large force structures that are often high cost, inappropriate, counterproductive, infeasible, or may incur significant political risk. When used effectively,

special warfare strategies yield disproportional benefits.[13] The RAA concept makes special warfare options more feasible for U.S. policymakers than ever before. A properly resourced RAA effort can bridge the gap between a direct combat advisory mission, such as the U.S. involvement with the Afghan Commandos, and one where U.S. forces are prohibited from being involved directly.[14] The potential type of operation is limited only by the Commander's imaginative use of the technology. RAA represents an evolutionary step forward in U.S. special operations forces' ability to reach forward and influence partners. PRISM

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Notes

[1] Examination of data collected on conflicts between 1775 and 2012 illustrates an increase in irregular conflict. Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (WW Norton & Company, 2013), 557-590.

[2] Department of the Army, Army Operating Concept, i, 14, 17, 22, 24, 25, 41.

[3] MAJ Keith Carter explores the history of technology integration since the Industrial Revolution and its correlation to the execution of war in his Master's Thesis. One of his hypotheses specifically states that "Periods of Adversity and Intense Strategic Competition will Increase Pressure to Integrate Revolutionary Technology, Whereas Periods of Stability will Promote the Continuation of Evolutionary Integrated, and Potentially Evolutionary and Disintegrated Technology." Please see his full thesis for further research on this topic: Keith L. Carter, "Technology Strategy Integration," (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2012).

[4] "ATAK is a mapping engine developed for the Android Operating System which allows for precision targeting, intelligence on surrounding land formations, navigation, and generalized situational awareness. ATAK is under continuous development by various government laboratories to include the Air Force Research Lab, the Army Research Laboratory and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. It enables users to navigate using GPS and National Geospatial Agency map data overlayed with real-time situational awareness of ongoing events." from "What is ATAK?," Android Windows Tactical Assault Kit, <https://atakmap.com/>.

[5] Bryan Dominique, "Never out of Reach: ARCENT's 15 month fight against ISIL," *The Official Homepage of the United States Army*, September 27, 2015, <http://www.army.mil/article/156142/Never_out_of_Reach__ ARCENT_s_15_month_fight_against_ISIL/>.

[6] The exact numbers of sorties directly affiliated with Remote Advise and Assist kit positional data and ISOF efforts are only available from classified sources; however, unclassified data does exist on the overall number of air missions flown against IS . For the purposes of this article, the *Operation Inherent Resolve* fact sheet provides a good metric of the overall air campaign. "Targeted Operations against ISIL terrorists," Department of Defense – *Operation*

Inherent Resolve website, <http://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0814_Inherent-Resolve>

7   "United States National Security Strategy," February 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf>.

8   Joints Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*, (2012): 1, <http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/JV2020_Capstone.pdf>.

9   United States Army Special Operations Command, ARSOF Operating Concept, 1–3; and United States Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020*, 3, 5.

10   Joints Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, June 2015, i, 1.

11   The National Military Strategy acknowledges the profound effects and role of technology: "The spread of new technologies enables a global information environment and empowers people to see more, share more, create more, and organize faster than ever before. This is challenging competitive advantages long held by the United States." It also further identifies the importance of partners and implies the role of SOF: "Regional partners are vital. The U.S. military contributes select combat forces, enabling technologies, and training in support of local partners… in a politically, financially, and militarily sustainable manner." Ibid, 1, 8.

12   The Uppsala Conflict Data Program has collected data on violent conflicts since 1970. Analysis indicates a clear increase in irregular conflicts. "UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia" and "UCDP Data for Download," Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, last modified July 21, 2015, <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP/>. Data collected on conflicts between 1775 and 2012 illustrates the same trend; and Boot, 557-590.

13   Department of the Army. F*ield Manual 3-18, Special Forces Operations*, 2.

14   The U.S. Special Operations mission in the Philippines has been characterized by training and advising, but not participating in combat operations with Philippine counterparts . It is an example of the type of mission that could have benefited from RAA . The following article from *Small Wars Journal* gives a brief overview of the scope of the mission, as well as its long term strategic importance to U.S. strategy: Mark Munson, "Has Operation Enduring Freedom Been a Success?," *Small Wars Journal*, April 5 2013.

Photos

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A sergeant with a Marine Special Operations Team urges Afghan National Army Commandos to move together during a drill at a rifle range outside their compound in Herat, Afghanistan Nov. 6. Members of the 9th Commando Kandak alongside their Marine counterparts conducted a familiarization fire in order to sharpen their weapons accuracy and safety skills.

Thinking Dangerously

Imagining United States Special Operations Command in the Post-CT World

BY DAVID C. ELLIS, CHARLES N. BLACK, AND MARY ANN NOBLES

I magine if there were no United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the Department of Defense (DOD) needed to create a new military entity to provide non-traditional military capability to support U.S. national security interests now and into the future. Escaping from the bonds of past experience and organizational identity, would today's SOCOM be envisioned or would it be something much different in terms of mission space, operational approach, organization, and culture?

The thought exercise above is intended to be provocative and uncomfortable for a command still actively fighting on multiple fronts. History, with all its successes, is not a predictor of future success and is but one factor to inform judgments about the future. A journey of innovation to keep pace with change is easily sidetracked with too much emphasis on past events.

This article addresses the possibility—indeed likelihood—that a rebalancing of direct and indirect special operations forces (SOF) approaches[1] and supporting core activities is essential for improving SOCOM's resiliency against unpredictable, black swan[2] events and for preventing it from becoming a "fragile" organization. Because the active fight continues and the command's bureaucratic machine still churns on the direct counterterrorism (CT) mission, concerns are here raised about how SOCOM sees itself and its strategic role in protecting national interests now and tomorrow.

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There is justifiably great pride in the extraordinary capabilities and skills SOCOM assembled to transform the nation's SOF enterprise to confront the terrorism threat. There is also a quiet acknowledgement that crucial SOF core activity skills[3] are in some cases atrophying while the bulk of the force is applied against enemy terrorist networks.[4] This perspective is best described as the little voice on the shoulder, the Jiminy Cricket, warning SOCOM that it could be poised for a substantial surprise unless it proactively takes steps to appreciate the emerging international system as it is, rather than how the bureaucracy wants the system to be.

The article proceeds in five parts. First, it briefly describes how SOCOM transformed from a "service-like" combatant command to become the spearhead of counterterrorism operations around the globe. Second, it provides an overview of the emerging international system to evaluate the nature of future mission requirements for SOF over the coming decades. Third, the "antifragile" and "Cynefin" models are offered as sense-making frames for imagining SOCOM's current vulnerability to future, unexpected shocks. Fourth, suggestions to help SOCOM become an antifragile organization are proposed. Finally, SOCOM Design Thinking is presented as a process for empowering creativity throughout the SOF enterprise to move toward antifragile structures and force preparation.

The Dangers of Success

SOCOM on September 10, 2001

On September 10, 2001, U.S. Special Operations Command was only 14 years old, and its primary responsibilities as a combatant command (COCOM) under Title 10 were to man, train, and equip SOF.[5] It was relatively young as an organization, it owned no authorities to command deployed forces, and its mission was to ensure the components cultivated the forces for other COCOMs to employ. In many ways, the organization recognized that it was not perceived as a peer to the other COCOMs or services.[6]

While clearly necessary to overcome deficiencies exposed by operations in Iran and Granada, this SOCOM was not the dream duty station of most SOF personnel. Outside of tactical units, SOF personnel often were incentivized to serve on their respective service component staffs as their staff assignment. Contrarily, SOCOM was and remains very much a joint force with all the entrapments of inter-service rivalry and conflicting cultures and doctrine. The Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) were not the responsibility of SOCOM and were themselves less than peer to fellow service components within each Geographic Combatant Command (GCC).

On that Monday morning in 2001, there were an average of 2,900 SOF personnel deployed across the world based on the requirements established and planned for by the GCCs.[7] Combined forward and support SOF elements totaled 44,600 personnel and deployment to dwell time averaged above a 1:1 ratio.[8] There were no true geostrategic threats that could credibly tax the military power of the United States outside the potential nexus of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist organizations committed to attacking it.[9] SOCOM consequently focused its efforts on foreign internal defense (FID), counterterrorism (CT), counterproliferation, and humanitarian assistance.[10] While reliance on SOF increased steadily throughout SOCOM's first

14 years, the demands were certainly manageable.

Responding to 9/11

September 11, 2001 forever altered SOCOM's future. Counterterrorism suddenly elevated in priority, scope, and scale from a niche, crisis response, and episodic capability to the center of foreign policy in a few short months.[11] A silent transformation[12] occurred at the headquarters in response to policy guidance combined with time-constrained military decisions focused on effective counterterrorism operations. This transformation reflected purposeful decisions in the prosecution of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) with unknowable consequences to the organization, its culture, and capability.

First among these decisions was the use of SOF to topple the Taliban regime in Afghanistan through a series of operations predominately led by special forces with close air support by the Joint Force Air Component Command.[13] Second was the need to unexpectedly employ SOF in Iraq's north working with Kurdish Peshmerga to support regime change operations in Iraq.[14] Third was the near immediate spike in counterterrorism operations in Iraq and later Yemen and Afghanistan. Consequently, fourth was the decision to have SOCOM lead the GWOT per the 2004 Unified Command Plan signed in early 2005.

By 2006, 85 percent of deployed SOF personnel were sent to U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), primarily Iraq. By 2010, SOCOM was forced to manage an average of 8,700 SOF deployed per week, with approximately 81 percent deployed to the CENTCOM AOR.[15]

Throughout the majority of this period, the main role for SOF in the GWOT was counter-network/counterterrorism activities, especially the "man hunting" mission.[16] The theory asserted that destroying enemy terrorist networks from the leadership down would provide national government allies the political space to reassert sovereign control over their populations and territories. The all-present metaphor was to "cut off the head of the snake" to neutralize the body. Even when counterinsurgency (COIN) became the main strategy, circa 2007, SOF predominantly emphasized FID/security force assistance (SFA) activities, especially cultivating indigenous special forces who could take over the counter-network operations—teaching partner forces the direct approach.

While the mission and operational employment have changed over time—from unconventional warfare (UW) and CT in Afghanistan, to a robust man-hunting centric apparatus (direct approach) in Iraq, to COIN in Iraq and Afghanistan, and back currently to a combination of FID and UW—there has been a consistency across all the missions. The preponderance of SOF effort has been either in the unilateral direct approach or training partner forces in the application of kinetic techniques. For SOCOM, counter-network/counterterrorism is a new core identity, or at least has been since taking the DOD lead for the CT fight. Moreover, the CT fight has never truly abated, ensuring that it stays elevated above other core activities as a relative matter.

Indirect and Dependent Core Activities Atrophying

Army Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster argues that the Revolution in Military Affairs[17] perspective of the early-1990s led many in the U.S. military to conflate targeting and raiding with strategy, consequently obscuring the fact

that war is political, human, and a test of wills.[18] Certainly the indirect approach envisioned in the early stages of the GWOT was rapidly eclipsed by the demand to disrupt the enemy networks in Afghanistan and Iraq using the direct approach. The decisive long-term success promised by indirect approaches was a casualty of political impatience and a desire for visible results.

COIN, FID, and SFA missions during the GWOT certainly relied heavily on military information support operations (MISO) and civil affairs (CA) capabilities, but they were in support of kinetic operations to enable governments to assert control over their populations. In other words, CA and MISO were secondary to operations rather than the center of operational design with kinetic activities tasked to support them.

For a short period during 2010-2012 in Afghanistan, Village Stability Operations (VSO) attempted to leverage the indirect approach as a primary SOF strategy. Kinetic operations shaped the environment to allow strategic relationships with anti-Taliban villagers to take root. Even this effort ultimately became reduced to local police numbers rather than the relationships Green Berets and even SEALs attempted to foster with suspicious, but hopeful local Afghans.[19]

Correcting Courses–Voluntarily or through Tragedy

Unfortunately the stress on the force has not abated. Even as of 2014, 7,200 SOF were deployed as a weekly average with 69 percent still supporting CENTCOM. Between 2006 and 2014, there was an increase in support to U.S. Africa Command from 1 to 10 percent, U.S.

PH1 Tim Turner, U.S. Navy

U.S. Navy Seal's search for al-Qaida and Taliban while conducting a Sensitive Site Exploitation mission in the Jaji Mountains, Jan. 12, 2002.

European Command doubled from 3 to 6 percent, and U.S. Pacific Command increased from 7 to 10 percent, but U.S. Southern Command remained relatively stable at 3 to 4 percent over the period.[20] With the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) seizing vast tracts of Syria and Iraq in 2014, the stress on the force has only worsened with a steady increase in SOF deployments to once again advise and assist U.S. partners in the direct approach.

Army General (Ret.) Raymond Odierno recently invoked Francis Bacon's caution that "things alter for the worse spontaneously, if they be not altered for the better designedly."[21] There is fortunately a robust discussion regarding the need to build flexible forces to meet emerging challenges.[22] Yet even these discussions occur within the frame of existing SOF core activities, brigade structures, and doctrinal activities. The overwhelming majority of these ideas and concepts were conceived and established under the conditions of the state-centric Cold War model and then amended haphazardly to deal with the fallout from its expiration. Designing a change strategy designedly first requires a concept of the impending requirements, but the characteristics of the future international system are likely to be far different than the mental models applied from past experience.

Imagining the Post-CT Future

Characteristics of the Emerging International System

Much of the reason SOCOM confidently focused on the direct action mission over the past 15 years was due to the nature of the international system. On September 11, 2001, the United States was still in the midst of its "unipolar moment."[23] Russia was struggling to chart an economic and political course, China was growing but unwilling to seriously challenge the nature of the international order, and Western Europe was still comfortably enjoying NATO protection and an expanding European Union.[24] Now the situation is substantially different. The world is trending toward a multipolar international system with a wicked mixture of state-sponsored proxy, nonstate actor fomented, and cyber-oriented low-level conflicts.[25]

In other words, the emerging international context over the coming decades is expected to require a combination of allied deterrence and population-centric, relationship-based activities across regions, domains, and functions.[26] In his assessment, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford concluded, "…I don't find the current phasing construct for operational plans particularly useful right now…I call it competition with a military dimension short of a Phase 3 or traditional conflict, but the activities that they're taking with regard to employment of cyber, unconventional capability, space capabilities [and] information operations are absolutely not associated with what we would call Phase Zero shaping…."[27] Stated differently, the linear concept of operational doctrine is decaying under the stresses of the emerging international context.

In SOCOM's view, the future of conflict revolves around what it dubs "the gray zone,"[28] which consists of "competitive interactions among and within state and nonstate actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality. They are characterized by ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks…Overall,

gray zone challenges rise above normal, every-day peacetime geopolitical competition and are aggressive, perspective-dependent and ambiguous."[29]

What makes the gray zone so complex from a SOCOM perspective is the multiplicity of national, sub-national, and nonstate actors operating within the international system, each with different interests, techniques, strategies, and capacities to subvert or operate on the margins of international law and institutions. The binding element for most of the main U.S. competitors is the desire to challenge the established Western-dominated international order or replace it altogether with new ordering values.[30]

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter[31] identified current defense challenges as Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and terrorism.[32] While it is unlikely that these challenges will be identical in the world 20 years hence, they are instructive as examples of how to think about and organize for the allied deterrence and population-centric activities that will be required of SOF and conventional forces (CF) to inoculate populations from malign actors in the coming years.

China

For decades, China followed a tradition of respecting non-interference norms adopted by the government in the late-1970s.[33] It recognized that internal economic development required relative regional stability and it quietly opted to support the status quo of the international order while steadily improving its economic and political capacity.[34] China currently boasts the world's largest population and second largest economy.[35] However, this growth has come with consequences. It now must import approximately 60 percent of its oil, it relies on shipping lanes with vulnerable choke points, and it has significant interests susceptible to regional instability in the Middle East and Africa.[36]

Consequently, China is now strategically dependent upon raw materials from Africa and Latin America and considers regional and sub-regional multilateral institutions as an important component of foreign policy.[37] Weak and failing states in Africa are prompting China to invest more heavily in bilateral development assistance to build relationships with African governments.[38] This aspect of foreign policy is dubbed "responsible protection" with Chinese participation devoted to facilitating reconciliation and infrastructure development.[39]

China has announced that it will begin to shape international norms and agendas, not just passively accept those asserted by previously dominant Western states.[40] In short, subversion of governments has no place in the present or future geostrategic interests of China since its overriding goal is stability to accelerate its gains in national power and to improve its military deterrence capability.[41]

China's government-centric foreign policy and increased exposure presents opportunities as well as risks. For instance, its development practices mirror those of the West from the 1950s-1980s, which resulted in significant critique and blowback from local populations. Rather than signifying a calculated conventional threat abroad, China's activities could inadvertently promote instability within countries and exacerbate regional tensions. China's actions could therefore alienate various populations across Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia and prompt a preference for Western engagement if relationships are nurtured over time. Conventional forces will certainly lead the majority of allied deterrence

requirements, but SOF could play an important role in strategic probing and population-centric activities.

Russia

Russia represents a revisionist power that consciously employs conventional, unconventional, and cyber warfare approaches. Called "New Generation Warfare," Russian foreign and military policy seeks to influence populations in the historical Russian sphere of influence by navigating between the lines of international law and along the seams of Western alliances to achieve piecemeal operational gains with overall strategic effect. As Bērziņš explains,

> Thus, the Russian view of modern warfare is based on the idea that the main battlespace is the mind and, as a result, new-generation wars are to be dominated by information and psychological warfare… The main objective is to reduce the necessity for deploying hard military power to the minimum necessary, making the opponent's military and civil population support the attacker to the detriment of their own government and country. It is interesting to note the notion of permanent war, since it denotes a permanent enemy. In the current geopolitical structure, the clear enemy is Western civilization, its values, culture, political system, and ideology.[42]

New Generation Warfare seeks to exploit the seams of allied deterrence through asymmetric, gray zone operations to avoid activating NATO's mandatory military response under Article 5.[43] Russia also seeks to expand its geopolitical influence beyond its own natural endowments through engagement abroad, such as with its own pivot to Asia and Southeast Asia.[44]

Russia's asymmetric approach can be balanced and deterred effectively with a mixture of both SOF and CF. Russia faces serious challenges to growth, such as a declining population and stress on its oil sector, and has a relatively small number of military-ready males.[45] When and where to deploy SOF and CF to stretch Russia's limited resources and increase its risk will be context dependent, but indirect action activities will probably have greater utility in this context.

Iran

Whereas in 2001 Iran had active proxies in only Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, it now appears to be consolidating its influence regionally with active proxy forces in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, and possibly Yemen.[46] Iran has deftly maneuvered through the Arab Spring dynamics to expand its reach across the Middle East through Shia communities and Palestinian militants disaffected by perceived Sunni Arab capitulation to Israel and the United States.[47] So concerning is this development that geostrategic discussions have reportedly occurred between Israel and Saudi Arabia.[48]

For a host of historical, religious, and ideological reasons, the Iranian regime believes it has the right and ability to become a regional power, if not a regional hegemon.[49] With extensive energy resources and sitting astride some of the most important international waterways, Iran is well positioned to influence international politics well beyond its immediate borders. Direct Russian military intervention in Syria supporting Iran, along with Chinese economic and geostrategic political support for Iran, indicate a significant setback

in U.S. influence in the region. The Middle East is now a mixture of unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, conventional warfare, and proxy warfare all wrapped in a cyber battle the United States appears unable to dominate.

ISIL

At the time of this writing, ISIL presents the clearest Sunni Salafi jihadist challenge to Western interests and potentially the basis of the international system. As a "global caliphate" with multiple "emirates," ISIL represents a nonstate revisionist actor that could potentially displace the borders of states whose populations have long-standing grievances with their governments.[50]

In terms of international politics, ISIL rejects the distinction between domestic and international politics, and, instead of sovereign states, it views territory as divided among believers in a state of peace and infidels in a state of war.[51] Turkish scholars Murat Yesiltas and Tuncay Kardas explain, "In short, ISIL challenges almost all of the 'primary institutions' of international society that incorporate the classical 'Westphalian set,' such as sovereignty, territoriality, war, international law and great power management, nationalism, and human equality."[52]

Importantly, ISIL is representative of a wider crisis of national identity across the Middle East and North Africa.[53] The wave of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in new states, but failed to create viable nations. The collapse of authoritarian regimes during the Arab Spring and new international norms stressing democratic political systems have enabled ethnic, sectarian, and tribal identities to tear at the fabric of the traditional state system.[54]

After years of conflict and sharpening ethno-sectarian rage, even the basic

Armed Islamic State

assumptions about the desirability of current international borders can no longer be taken for granted. Historical ethnic, sectarian, and trade zones are being drawn upon to re-con-ceptualize potential national borders.[55] Similar patterns have been underway for a long time across Northern Africa. Again, Yesiltas and Kardas cogently summarize the situation:

> *Under the contemporary experiments, however, state structures tend to stumble and anarchy prevails as the new normal, producing failed states such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen…Such transformations turn states away from security provision as they become instead a source of insecurity, pushing sub-national ethnic and religious groups to form their own security architecture (i.e. Syria, Iraq and Libya). The resulting struggle of non-state armed groups for control over territory confronts states with a deep ISIL [sic] of security and identity…Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen are almost a microcosm of the emerging new micro-geopolitical mechanism of survival engaging major actors as well as violent non-state armed actors.[56]*

In countries where identity politics and fear of government security services undermine the state system, FID and SFA engagement with a direct action orientation could actually aggravate the tensions that make revisionist nonstate actors attractive to aggrieved populations. Sensitivity to such environments requires a higher degree of intelligence and placement than SOF enjoys today.

Rebalancing SOF Core Activities Given the Emergent International System

If the trends above are accurate and likely to persist, then the concept of "stability" in the international system becomes an illusory and reactive position. Multipolar and gray zone dynamics in the 21st century will be inherently unstable and require constant probing. Strategic opportunities will need to be sensed and seized upon through established access, placement, and relationships with allies and proxies.[57] The emerging international context will require accepting change over stability and being proactive, experimental, and creative to inoculate populations from the influence of U.S. competitors and enemies.

In other words, there is a potentially high opportunity cost to SOCOM if it continues to emphasize direct over indirect action. SOF cannot be everywhere and it will have to coordinate with the CF to apply the right allied deterrence or relationship-building effect. The majority of U.S. challengers are playing for the long game— influencing populations, changing mindsets, using force to creatively create space where populations currently challenge their own governments. An appropriate strategic response is to play in the same realm, which means that relationships and deep cultural appreciation will become strategic multipliers for national security.

Anti-Fragile and Cynefin as Concepts for the Emerging International System

To say the world is becoming more "complex" is so cliché as to have little meaning. Yet thinking in terms of complexity does have value for conceptualizing how SOCOM repositions itself relative to its potential Title 10 responsibilities and its current role as synchronizing the Department's efforts against transregional threats. As the international system moves toward multipolar and gray zone characteristics, a bureaucracy that has incentivized direct approaches could be setting itself up for

strategic failure. Ironically, the world's fiercest special operations enterprise could be considered a "fragile" one nonetheless.

Fragile and Antifragile Organization Characteristics

Nassim Nicholas Taleb argues in a series of books that improbable events are highly probable despite being rare. Black swan events are only injurious because organizations do not anticipate them and leave themselves open to risk. Positive black swans also occur, but can be easily missed if organizations fail to "tinker" with and "collect" them due to a lack of exposure and flexibility.[58] Organizations that assume the future operating context will resemble the current one become dependent upon that key assumption. In turn, they become highly vulnerable—or fragile—to shocks in the system.[59]

"Antifragile" organizations, on the other hand, are those that best position themselves to absorb shocks and emerge stronger from the experience.[60] In between the fragile – antifragile spectrum is "robustness," which Taleb views as the ability to survive a shock and rebound over time.[61] There is, thus, an important distinction between antifragile and robust organizations, and Taleb recommends striving for antifragility as much as possible to mitigate the costs of black swan events.[62]

Imagining SOCOM as a "fragile" organization is surely hard for many. In truth, SOCOM will not fold if another black swan of the magnitude of 9/11 hits the United States; it will persist. The concept of fragility relates more to the less obvious opportunity costs associated with forfeited (a) influence with allies, (b) balancing options against aggressive competitors,

(c) critical ground intelligence or situational awareness, (d) potential loss of funding and readiness, and—most importantly—(e) lives lost responding to crises rather being proactively positioned to influence them before the event or prevent them altogether.

Strategic failure to appropriately fulfill its responsibilities is the fragility SOCOM faces. As it currently stands, a SOCOM bureaucracy rooted in a CT-centric identity believes it *should* provide appropriately trained SOF to meet a relatively restricted range of SOF missions with an emphasis on providing the best equipped man hunters in the world to defeat terrorist networks—or it will train partners to do the same. Although the other core activities are not consciously ignored, by default they receive less attention in both the resourcing and operational arenas. SOCOM's emphasis on direct action could be too "simple" a solution for the political complexity facing SOCOM as a strategic foreign policy asset.

Complexity and Cynefin Framework

To be clear, nothing about SOF counterterrorism and direct action capabilities is simple. In fact, the very creation and sustainment of an agile, man hunting enterprise is unprecedented and, quite frankly, remarkable. Yet how SOCOM and its bureaucracy make sense of their contributions to U.S. national security interests could be moving in the "simple" direction. The terms "simple, complicated, complex, and chaos" are derived from a highly instructive sense-making model, called the Cynefin Framework (Figure 1).[63] The framework is designed to aid conceptual exploration and explain where one sits during a period of change.

When the operating environment is perceived to be static, or in a frame "understood,"

based upon years of experience, then it is normal to interpret activities within an ordered system. In Cynefin, ordered systems can be divided into "simple" and "complicated" domains. Simple domains are well known, cause and effect are easily understood, and best practices are applied against criteria to determine appropriate responses. The tasks are to sense, categorize, and respond. Complicated domains are still ordered, but require specialized or expert knowledge to make sense of cause and effect. The tasks are to sense, analyze, and respond, and, since there might be multiple interpretations of the specialized analysis, response activities fall along a range of good practices.[64]

When organizations enter the complex domain, cause and effect are unknowable and interactions lack clear order despite what our eyes and minds might deceive us into believing. Complex domains are typically fluid, open systems, meaning the number of variables influencing events are too numerous or hidden to truly grasp or measure. Most social interactions fall into this category,[65] and the tasks are to probe, sense, and respond to learn how populations and social structures operate. There are no best or even good practices to rely upon because every situation is unique. The only option is failsafe experimentation or "emergent practice."[66] Emergent practice means trial and error, intervening in the system without prediction or certainty. This is not a routinely accepted approach to military operations.

Familiarity with the culture and politics of one's domestic social environment offers at least a starting point for investigations and

Figure 1. The Cynefin Framework. Adapted from Brougham 2015, 8-9.

research. Entering a completely foreign social environment with radically different cultural and normative underpinnings magnifies the degree of the situation's complexity. The more the military is required to work with foreign partners and populations, the more first-hand experience it will require to avoid alienating vital populations.

In the final domain, chaos, no order or possibility of deciphering meaning exists. The tasks are to act, sense, and respond to stabilize the situation, sense outcomes to the stabilization effort, and adapt as much as possible with novel practice. There is high probability for error, but effort must start somewhere.[67]

Improving one's sense of a situation can lead to crossing borders, such as from chaos to complex, complex to complicated, or complicated to simple. In some Cynefin models, the simple domain is depicted as having a precipice over which organizations can fall into the chaos domain. It is the only border where this exists, and it is meant to demonstrate that an organization's own sense of order is inherently perilous should a black swan occur.[68] Depending on the domain one is in, the thinking and behaviors should be different. An organization wrapped up in its current operating environment becomes fragile to black swans because it believes it is acting in a world of best practices—everything can be fit into the sense of mission…until it suddenly cannot.

From a sense-making perspective, SOCOM has transformed its own sense of self from one distributed across a range of components with a range of capabilities to meet a range of equally specialized missions to one narrowly focused on a particular specialized capability. In effect, SOCOM has transformed from a heterogeneous confederation able to adapt to complexity to a more homogeneous enterprise focused on a much more narrow perception of its place in the active fight.

Avoiding a "Fragile" SOCOM on the Cliff's Edge

As the international system evolves with a wider range of potential threats and strategic initiatives by competitors, the "simple" assumptions of the value of SOF as a strategic national asset deserve reconsidering. Direct action and its associated partner capacity missions could very well exacerbate many of the dynamics working against U.S. national interests. Growing systemic complexity consequently demands questioning the very foundations of SOCOM identity and strategic posturing for emerging global politics.

Prevalent within SOF is the no fail attitude: "just give me the authorities and I'll get it done." While critical to SOF direct action and counterterrorism success at the tactical and operational levels, this attitude does not help inform the strategic issues of what should be done and where because it implicitly relates to the many current kinetically-oriented SOF missions. In other words, there is a strong chance of groupthink pervading the bureaucracy with a "simple" sense-making perspective of SOCOM's singular role in the contemporary environment.

The prevalent organizational identity and bias reduces the divergent thinking necessary to question the initial and continued emphasis on counterterrorism missions given the changes in the international context. Concentrating force development and capabilities to fuel the man hunting enterprise could leave SOCOM "fragile" to a black swan event. SOCOM could be swept over the precipice into the "chaos" of the new international order. SOCOM would likely rise once again,

but it would be extraordinarily costly in lives, treasure, and strategic influence.

Clearly, there has been some self-reflection within SOF as evidenced by the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) 2022 vision. Specifically that vision has since manifested in organizational changes with the creation of the Office of Special Warfare, 1st Special Forces Command, and new 4th Battalions for each group. This is but a single step; one that might be an attempt to "return to history" by building what we wish special forces possessed on 9/11. Is it informed by lessons learned about the past or informed by judgment about the future?

The current and emerging strategic and operational requirements ought to shape and inform capability development. Too often the military creates capabilities agnostic of the environment then seeks a mission. This approach will not suffice to meet the challenges SOF will face in the future. The enterprise must retain a diverse set of capabilities to meet an equally diverse set of known and unknown threats. While ARSOF 2022 is a good starting point for discussion and useful for U.S. Army Special Operations Command, it is not a joint vision for the SOF enterprise and its place and role in the emergent future. SOCOM must chart a course that unifies the "tribes" and enables the maturation of SOCOM into a true SOF enterprise. The critical question is whether the SOCOM vision is aligned with the emergent future and role of SOF within that world.

Anti-Fragile SOCOM Principles

Reframe SOCOM's Role

Unless SOCOM purposefully changes its frame of the situation, it will not recognize its problem or acknowledge a need to change until it is confronted by surprise and failure. Protecting or codifying what was built during the CT war is no guarantee against strategic failure and is more likely to contribute to strategic surprise and organizational failure in the future.

The exploitation of the gray zone by our traditional and newly emerging competitors, adversaries, and enemies demands a shift in our thinking about the evolving role of SOF. The United States has a reactive, contingency approach to the use of military forces. As such, politicians provide guidance and the military develops a range of plans to employ military power to address what we anticipate—crisis and war. This approach may have been appropriate in the more predictable and less dynamic Cold War era, but is untenable in the modern era.

Proactive SOF actions today—informed by a desire to prevent war—would manifest operations differently. Often no less operationally risky, these precisely crafted operations would nest within the gray zone predominated by indirect approaches. A change in thinking would lead to changes in the ways SOF organizes (perhaps less rigid and permanent), procures, trains, and operates to accomplish its role in the continuously evolving world. The nuanced and often subtle application of the full range of current and yet-to-be-developed SOF capabilities will be required for success.

Relationship Entrepreneur Vision

Building relationships for both allied deterrence and inoculating populations from malign actors is clearly a growing strategic requirement. For SOCOM, this means appreciating the world through the lens of U.S. competitors and enemies, forecasting the

populations they are likely to target for expansion 5 to 10 years from the present, acquiring relevant population-centric analysis and intelligence, and preparing SOF personnel for engagement. Doing so proactively instead of waiting for a crisis can greatly reduce the cost of gathering information and allow the United States to proactively deny the enemy operating space.[69]

Reframe the 21st Century Operator

The Future SOF operator may not be recognizable to those in the force today. SOF has established tests of physical prowess, mental endurance, and intellect, and these attributes might well remain valid for certain SOF tribes. Tomorrow might require the addition or evolution of the operator with different skills and characteristics beyond those needed today. There are already fragments within the enterprise that recognize the need for change, and the deeply-seated bias of current selection criteria is an obstacle to change.

Moreover, it might be the case that SOCOM will require all SOF to focus on building relationships for strategic effect. What would SOF hypothetically look like if there were a merging of Civil Affairs, Cyber, and MISO that constituted the core SOF identity while kinetic operators settled into a less forward role to create the operating space to amplify their effects?

At a minimum, the debate should raise some interesting issues about organizational structure, identity, recruitment, and training. Could it be, for instance, that the line between enabler and operator of today will erode, blur, and become contextually dependent upon the mission? Could it be, as with Russian New Generation Warfare, the preponderance of the force might need to be experts in influence operations, but more fluent in cyber, MISO, and other technologies not yet fielded? Is it possible that an entirely new tribe of operator needs to evolve to give added diversity in times of dynamic change?

To encourage divergent ideas and probe the complexity, SOCOM must protect the diversity of the SOF tribes and reduce any unintended trend toward creating homogeneity. An Operational Detachment Alpha is not analogous to a SEAL Platoon, nor is a Marine Raider Team the same as a Ranger Platoon. They each are drawn from a different service and pool of candidates and are screened, selected, and trained for a range of missions. SOF's strength remains its diversity and agility of thinking and force capability. This key attribute must be guarded even at the expense of limiting capacity in certain mission areas.

Choose Missions Wisely–Forces are not Fungible

With this diversity comes limited capacity whereby military and political leaders must selectively employ SOF for the most critical missions and not those that can be accomplished by CF who in their own right have gained much during this war. Given the rate of deployment, SOCOM should reconsider the core activities and whether under future conditions it is even wise for SOF to undertake them. For instance, during the height of the SOF deployments, CF assumed many FID and SFA responsibilities.

To preserve the military's most precious forces, SOCOM should reserve SOF capabilities for the highest payoff and most difficult problems that cannot be addressed through other military options. SOCOM must guard against SOF's trend toward becoming a hyper-conventional force typical of the operator

mentality, "We can do it better or faster!" While it might be true in many cases, it does not mean SOF should be the force employed. This also means a much smaller SOF formation must rely on its relationship with the CF and be more fully integrated. Certainly these lessons have been learned in mature theaters, but this applies in time of crisis as well.

Bureaucracy that Encourages Creativity

Bernard Shaw once said, "Progress is impossible without change, and those who can't change their minds can't change anything." Although the conditions that sustain extremism are far from gone, SOCOM has a responsibility to offer the nation alternative solutions to a myriad of challenges beyond counterterrorism. SOF's alternative thinking about military problems is in essence an unstated core activity that has and will continue to contribute to U.S. national security.

If SOCOM is indeed fragile to black swan events, it is because the bureaucracy—like in most organizations—becomes entranced with its own process based on an unchanging identity. As military personnel rotate in and out and government civilians hesitantly implement fleeting orders, creativity, innovation, and agility are lost if not rejected. To avoid fragility, leadership, particularly at the action officer and O-6 and GS-14/15 levels, must encourage creative thinking; of course, this goes against hierarchical bureaucratic traditions. They should ask, "Have we become rigid in our thinking about ourselves, the world, and our role within it?" More importantly, they should encourage their personnel to do so on a regular basis and be open to thoughtful conclusions from their staffs when such answers arise.

Conclusion: Thinking is Dangerous— Imagining Change

The implications are potentially unsettling for many in the SOF enterprise

Many in the SOF enterprise have identities shaped by their experiences and successes in the CT arena. For many mid-grade and senior leaders, the CT era is all they know. Questioning the efficacy of the current "way of doing business" can be seen as a direct challenge to the very heart of the operator and the force. SOF are certainly creative within the tactical box. But SOCOM as an enterprise must be ready to remove the box and question whether the core activities themselves are valid, invalid, incomplete, or in need of redefining to align with the evolving world.

There have been internal initiatives to reemphasize the need for indirect approaches and a return to core with UW or its new stepbrother, counter-UW or "support to resistance." The likely shift to operations in the gray zone will offer legal challenges for traditional military activities that are normally more precisely recognized and defined. In such circumstances, direct action teams and even FID/SFA might be the wrong types of SOF to employ since they will not be activated. SOF for the gray zone will take some time to train and prepare, so the hard questions must be posed now while there is still time to realign.

Design Thinking as one component

SOCOM Design Thinking is a powerful tool to help individuals and the enterprise as a whole successfully navigate complexity. In 2015, former SOCOM commander General Joseph Votel, voiced concern that the organization might have become too rigid in its

imagination and identity. He tasked the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) to develop a SOCOM Design Thinking approach to unleash the store of creativity shuffling through its halls.[70] General Votel intuited that the key to becoming an antifragile organization was to energize the 69,000 minds across the SOF enterprise to crunch on the challenges ahead.

The SOCOM Design Thinking approach can help the command adapt to a non-linear, complex world in a number of areas. First, it can promote creative SOF thinking about how to proactively navigate emerging opportunities while critically deconstructing the emphasis on the inherently reactive concept of stability. Doing so better positions SOF for positive black swan events whether through cultivated relationships or mistakes by challengers. Second, it can empower essential questioning on whether SOF should be deployed to take on missions CF can effectively handle. SOF are on a path for becoming expended, especially in light of conventional force reductions which will inevitably reduce the size of SOF in the coming years. Third, it can inform the professional, language, and cultural training of the force for engaging populations before competitors seize the initiative. Fourth, it can assist creative thinking outside the direct action lens through which the majority of mid-grade and senior leaders have experienced SOF over the last 15 years of conflict. Their experiences and expectations of what it means to be SOF will likely require adaptation to the emerging international context and new technology.

It is certainly possible that the emerging international context described above is missing important nuance and other critical variables. The purpose in writing this article is less about the vision of the future and more about the process of unleashing creativity. If the future envisioned here is wrong or incomplete, it is hoped that superior ones appear. The key is for leadership within SOCOM to encourage critical introspection, accept the discomfort of the process, improve SOCOM's ability to respond to emerging challenges and inevitable black swan events, and to restore SOCOM as an antifragile organization for a very complex world. PRISM

Notes

[1]   For the purposes of discussion, this article defines direct and indirect approaches broadly according to the application of force whether by US or partner military and police forces. The authors fully recognize that direct action has a specific mission connotation. ARSOF 2022 recommends using the terms Surgical Strike and Special Warfare, respectively, but the authors are writing for the broader SOF enterprise inclusive of components' contributions vice exclusively the Army SOF component specifically (US Army Special Operations Command 2013).

[2]   Black Swan events are very rare, high impact, and predictable only in retrospect. They can be good or bad, but most analysts tend to focus on the negative Black Swan events due to the harm they cause those oblivious to the probability (Taleb 2010, xxii).

[3]   SOF core activities include a range of direct and indirect approaches; each designed to achieve different though often complementary strategic, political effects. Capabilities with a kinetic character include direct action (DA), counterterrorism (CT), foreign internal defense (FID), security force assistance (SFA), and hostage rescue and recovery. Capabilities with a non-kinetic character include military information support systems (MISO), civil affairs operations (CAO), and foreign humanitarian assistance. Of course, many of these activities blend in practice or are specifically required to work in concert such as during unconventional warfare (UW), irregular warfare (IW), counterinsurgency (COIN), and counter-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD) operations.

[4]   Joseph L. Votel, Charles T. Cleveland, Charles T. Connett, and Will Irwin. "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone." *Joint Forces Quarterly* 80, no. 1st Qtr (2016): 102; David Scott Mann. *Game Changers: Going Local to Defeat Violent Extremists*. Leesburg, VA: Tribal Analysis Center, 2015.

[5]   USSOCOM/SOCS-HO. *United States Special Operations Command History, 6th Edition*. 6th. MacDill AFB, FL: United STates Special Operations Command, 2008, 8.

[6]   Ibid., 12-18.

[7]   United States Government Accountability Office. *Special Operations Forces: Opportunities Exist to Improve Transparency of Funding and Assess Potential to Lessen Some Deployments*. Congressional Committees,

United States Government Accountability Office, Washington, DC: US GAO, 2015, 23.

[8]   Ibid., 9 & 26.

[9]   Charles Krauthammer. "The Unipolar Moment Revisited." *The National Interest*, Winter 2002/03: 9.

[10]   USSOCOM/SOCS-HO, *SOCOM History, 6th* ed., 9-10.

[11]   Ibid., 14-17.

[12]   (Jullien 2011)

[13]   13 USSOCOM/SOCS-HO, 91-107.

[14]   Ibid., 121-137.

[15]   USGAO, *Opportunities Exist to Improve Transparency of Funding*, 23-24.

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Photos

Socioethnic and ideological divides have catapulted Syria into a civil war that has destroyed the unity of the region since 2011.

Resistance Dynamics and Social Movement Theory

Conditions, Mechanisms, and Effects

BY D.W. LEE

Understanding Current Conflicts

Contemporary conflicts have become more transnational, protracted, irregular, and resistance-centric.[1] They can be best described as protracted internal conflicts with multiple state actors and nonstate actors intervening much like the multidimensional hybrid operational environment discussed in Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) 2022.[2]

This article aims to explain how to harness the emerging strategic utility of nonstate actors by utilizing well-established bodies of knowledge on resistance dynamics. This objective is based upon the observation that an increasing number of external state actors overtly or covertly intervene in intrastate conflicts by exploiting the environment's resistance potential in order to increase their respective strategic influence.[3] Similarly, both internal and external nonstate actors take advantage of interstate conflicts or political instability stemming from failing states. The current conflicts in Iraq and Syria certainly meet this characterization; as do those in Ukraine, Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia, Mali, and Libya. More state actors are supporting or sponsoring political movements in intrastate conflict, making the termination of fighting very difficult. For instance, the resilience of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is largely attributed to the protracted Syrian civil war in which regional powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey all sponsor local movements. In addition, external nonstate actors such as ISIL, al-Nusrah, and Hezbollah are also deeply involved in the conflict. In other words, these current conflicts represent a sample of a larger shift in warfare. As of this writing, Uppsala University's world conflict data program compiles 40 conflicts in the world for 2014. All but one of them are intrastate conflicts and 13 of them are internationalized.[4] In short, state actors are actively leveraging and taking advantage of the resistance potential of groups engaged in civil conflicts.

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The United States must adapt to this operational environment in order to achieve national policy objectives. Key to this goal is a shared problem identification that will lead to mitigation and reduction of the fog and friction inherent in a hybrid operational environment. Problem identification begins with understanding how external groups are leveraging and harnessing the resistance potential of organic movements toward their respective strategic interests. By understanding how resistance potential is shaped toward strategic objectives, we can also better determine how to replicate the best practices of supporting and sponsoring robust organic movements.

In order to fight successfully in this complex hybrid environment, a deep understanding of resistance dynamics is critical. Without understanding resistance dynamics, it becomes next to impossible to identify who is working with adversarial state actors and how their nonstate surrogates gain political support against our own strategic interests. Our recent unsuccessful attempt at building a surrogate force in Syria is a good reminder of why it matters to harness the utility of organic resistance. Instead of building a sustainable movement with an armed wing, we thought a program designed to train and equip a few dozen commandos would suffice.[5] This article intends to delineate the strategic dynamics of resistance and discuss the utility of resistance as a strategic tool.

I will begin with a discussion of how resistance is conceptualized in doctrinal and academic terms to distill the essential characteristics of the concept. Then I will highlight three aspects of resistance: antecedent conditions, mechanisms, and effects. I will identify what antecedent conditions facilitate resistance, followed by a variety of mechanisms employed by movements to exploit the conditions. The discussion of mechanisms accompanies a description of the effects that can be expected when movements take advantage of these conditions. The article concludes with a discussion of some of the essential traits associated with effective resistance in highly repressive environments.

This article is mostly informed by social movement theory and collective action theory. Other disciplines also address resistance. However, political sociology offers the deepest insights into internationalized civil wars and resistance given its disciplinary focus on revolutionary, resistance, and insurgent dynamics. The article offers a broad overview of the multidisciplinary resistance literature as opposed to an in-depth case study of a single resistance movement. The main purpose is to distill commonly established and empirically validated patterns and mechanisms of resistance. I also use resistance and insurgency interchangeably throughout. Given how extensively organic movements have been utilized by external actors, one's resistance movement is frequently another's insurgency.[6] Pragmatism guides this article; it aims to learn the best practices from all forms of robust movements regardless of their political orientation.

What is a Resistance Movement?

In order to harness the utility of resistance, this article begins with some definitions, both doctrinal and academic. The Department of Defense defines a resistance movement as "an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability."[7] In political science or sociology, resistance is notoriously difficult to define due to its

multidisciplinary nature. It can arguably range from armed guerillas to symbolic gestures depending on which academic discipline defines it.[8] Because of this diversity, I use a broad academic definition of resistance in order to avoid a potential bias: "[collective and] active efforts to oppose, fight, and refuse to cooperate with or submit to … abusive behavior and…control."[9] We can infer three shared characteristics from the definitions: organization, civilian components, and disruption or coercion against some authority.

Unfortunately, these definitions offer little on how to recognize resistance potential and leverage it toward a strategic objective. This is where social movement theory can inform us of the process of resistance. Based on the political process model developed by Douglas McAdam, we can approach resistance from

three different angles: antecedent conditions, mechanisms, and effects.[10] This is a very useful way to think about resistance as the synthesis helps us understand what one should include to develop a resistance movement. That is, the United States should understand what conditions to factor in, what activities to support, and what effects can be expected toward the end-state.

Figure 1 depicts typical processes in the development of resistance movements. They are organized in three categories: conditions, mechanisms, and effects. The utility of these categories is threefold. First, there is much confusion about what factors promote robust resistance, often conflating what is available in the environment with what activities should be emphasized. Second, little discussion exists on what effects external actors can facilitate

Figure 1: Social Movement Approach to Resistance Dynamics
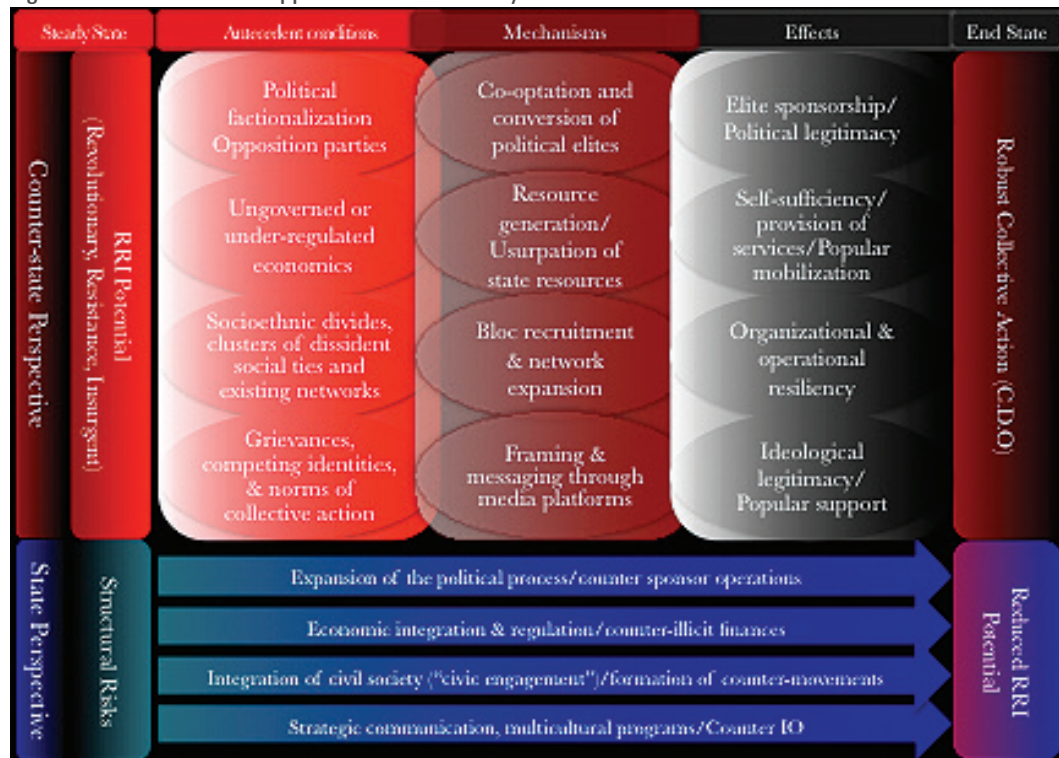
with and through surrogate movements. Without understanding recurring links between conditions, mechanisms, and effects, it is almost impossible to confidently support resistance elements. Figure 1 clarifies some of the confusion and suggests what to look for, what to do, and what to achieve to support a robust resistance movement. The categories represent broad factors and should not be understood as specific prescriptions.

Conditions

Antecedent conditions are independent of any other explanatory variable.[11] An antecedent condition can be defined as "a phenomenon whose presence activates or magnifies the action of a causal law or hypothesis."[12] In

Catholic priest Jerzy Popieluszko's sermons mobilized a broad segment of the Polish population. His martyrdom immensely expanded the political opportunities for the opposition movement.

essence, antecedent conditions are locally available ingredients that can be enhanced or amplified through active mechanisms toward robust resistance. In order to support resistance then, it is critical that intelligence preparation of the battlefield begin by analyzing what conditions exist in the operational environment.

Social movement theory suggests four major types of antecedent conditions: political, economic, social, and informational. Political conditions can be factions within the regime or the existence of political opposition groups. Such political groups might be formal or informal. In addition, nonpolitical entities can also expand political opportunities for resistance movements. For instance, Jerzy Popieluszko was instrumental in providing political legitimacy to the Polish opposition movement and Solidarity. Popieluszko was a Catholic priest who routinely delivered anticommunist sermons and gave both religious and nationalist speeches in support of Solidarity. His sermons mobilized such a broad segment of the Polish population that the regime had him assassinated in 1984. Ironically his martyrdom immensely expanded political opportunities for the opposition movement.

Religious leaders creating political opportunities for resistance movements are not uncommon. Cardinal Jaime Sin of the Philippines was able to turn the tide in 1986 when the first "people's power" movement managed to oust Ferdinand Marcos.[13] Marcos ordered his military to crush the opposition movement supporting Corazon Aquino, widow of the assassinated senator Benigno Aquino Jr. Cardinal Sin immediately issued a statement urging Catholics to go out and protect the protesters from the troops who had

been ordered to shoot.[14] Similarly, Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador gave a great deal of political legitimacy to political opposition groups such as the Democratic Revolutionary Front and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).[15] His support for resistance groups opposing the El Salvadoran regime was so powerful that he too was assassinated. At his funeral, more than 100,000 mourners gathered demanding both land and political reforms.[16] The FMLN's guerilla force was still very weak and unable to mount effective offensives against the government. The army fired on the mourners, killing dozens. This massacre quickly became a mobilizing narrative for opposition groups. In fact, the assassination of Romero drove many sympathizers and nonviolent activists to actively support and join the FMLN guerrillas.[17]

Elections provide unique political opportunities for resistance. The overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic took place right after the rigged presidential election of 2000. Marcos was also overthrown following the 1986 snap election in the Philippines where the appearance of election fraud was quickly utilized for mobilization. Cardinal Ricardo Vidal almost immediately made a statement condemning the apparent election irregularities. Where elections are used as a tool of political legitimation, resistance potential follows. The key is to maintain continuously updated information about political events and elections in countries of interest. Even draconian regimes tend to allow elections if only to achieve international legitimacy. This provides a unique opportunity to map the political landscape of the regime.

Certain economic conditions are highly associated with the onset of resistance movements. However, not all robust resistance

movements are attributable to economic downturns. Typically, conditions often linked with the onset of resistance include income inequalities, under-employment, unemployment, inflation, or income stagnation. Note that it is often external shocks that trigger the exacerbation of these conditions. Economic measures taken by external actors can create a more conducive environment for organic resistance.[18]

Ungoverned or under-regulated economics can also provide opportunities for resistance groups to generate resources to sustain themselves. These unsanctioned economic areas typically have built in informal or autonomous channels of resource extraction and redistribution. The autonomy of the Bazaar in Iran was a major factor during the Iranian revolution of 1979.[19] The Bazaar provided much needed resources to key organizers of the resistance when the regime cut subsidies and stipends to students and academics.[20]

Economic conditions themselves are rarely sufficient for resistance to emerge or to take hold. While economic conditions throughout the Middle East were generally comparable in the 1980s and 1990s, insurgent movements emerged in only a few select countries.[21] While all major macroeconomic indicators were comparable in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia between 1980 and 1992, only the first two countries experienced major insurgent movements. This reflects the explanatory poverty of the classical model of resistance which links collective action directly to individual psychological conditions. Several flawed assumptions explain the limited analytic value of the classical model.[22] First, it is almost impossible to observe and measure individual psychological conditions in order to see how they may impact resistance,

especially in less than fully developed countries. Second, even if such conditions were observable, the classical model offers no causal mechanisms to link the assumed individual psychological disequilibrium with collective mobilization. It just offers a leap of faith between individual psychology and collective action. Thus, Fearon and Laitin show with their empirical analysis of the Minority at Risk dataset that ethnic divides or grievances alone rarely explain the intensity or duration of civil wars.[23] In fact, they provide statistical evidence that the outbreak of intrastate conflicts cannot be explained by the strength of political grievances. This is not a trivial finding given how popular the notion of grievance is in the common understanding of insurgent dynamics. Third, the antiquated classical theory of insurgency cannot explain how resistance can take place in developed countries.

Individual grievances do play a role in the development of resistance. The question is how. Typically, grievances become instrumental when they are exploited and framed by groups or networks actively seeking to create opportunities for collective mobilization. For the special operations forces (SOF) community to harness resistance potential, then, the focus should be on both the existing conditions and the activities of political actors. This is in essence what Emirbayer and Goodwin call the problem of agency, warning of the false promise of structural determinism.[24] In other words, one cannot properly leverage resistance unless potential (antecedent conditions) is understood in the context of agency (purposeful activities).

Socioethnic divides and existing dissident networks provide great potential for resistance. In particular, external actors can leverage such conditions to establish a robust organizational

platform. It is no coincidence that most robust resistance movements emerge from pre-existing ties and networks. These pre-existing ties typically have built-in mechanisms to coordinate information and action across civil society. Ethnic divides can be a powerful fault-line to promote resistance initially. However, an isolated group can be an easy target for the regime to marginalize and vilify. The SOF community must pay attention to what network resources socioethnic groups can contribute to the creation of broad coalitions of resistance movements as opposed to just relying on a single subgroup.

Ideological conditions refer to existing grievances stemming from economic disparities or structural strains such as income inequalities, unemployment, underemployment, or discrimination. In essence, these conditions often stem from social, economic, or political strains. They also include existing norms of collective action and violence that can be utilized to justify mobilizing large groups for resistance. For instance, a sense of victimization is often used by Islamists to justify jihad.[25] Typically, insurgents will try to align their ideology with socially accepted themes of dissent.[26] Instead of treating resistance ideology as a monolithic worldview, it is more useful to approach it as a set of grievances specifically framed to motivate and justify collective action.

Causal Mechanisms and Effects

Mechanisms refer to the causal links between antecedent conditions and outcome variables. In the social sciences, a causal mechanism is defined as "physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information,

or matter to other entities."[27] Translated to the concept of resistance, causal mechanisms are the activities and techniques used by insurgents or activists to exploit and accelerate the antecedent conditions for resistance purposes. Effects, then, are the outcomes insurgents intend to accomplish by exploiting the conditions through a variety of mechanisms.

United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) recently released a concept paper that emphasizes cultivating soldiers "with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to understand and influence human actions and activities."[28] The same concept paper stresses the need to link these activities to creating desired effects in the human domain.[29] Understanding how mechanisms are related to effects is not only academically useful, but also operationally relevant to the human domain.

Conversion/Co-optation and Effects

When opposition political groups support a resistance movement, the latter typically gains legitimacy quickly. This legitimacy can also be used to gain support from the population. For the movement, this is perhaps the quickest path to leveraging existing groups to elevate its political appeal. As Robert Helvey demonstrates, conversion is a powerful mechanism to transform potential political fractures into resistance.[30] He notes that the Serbian opposition movement was able to oust Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, even though the regime possessed much more powerful coercive means, because some of the Serbian police and bureaucrats withdrew their loyalty.[31] In essence, regime sympathizers were *converted* to support the opposition movement.

Conversion is the process by which the movement signals to the pillars of regime support that they will be disenfranchised by the

movement.[32] The movement will work with some regime elements to either facilitate or stabilize the eventual transfer of political authority. This is a different way to establish auxiliary and underground networks for resistance. Instead of creating purpose-built networks from elements outside of the ruling coalition, the logic of conversion would prescribe identifying moderate or disgruntled factions within the power structures of the regime. Resistance can be considered as a zero-sum political game where one defection or acquiescence means a twofold gain for the movement and a twofold loss to the regime. From this perspective the benefits of conversion become clear compared to those of building external resistance networks to match the regime's coercive capacity.

However, internal conversion and external network building are not mutually exclusive mechanisms. Rather, they should be considered complimentary processes designed to leverage political fractures. Conversion can also be used in the steady state. A political claim made by the resistance movement can gain popular support if an existing political party or influential dissidents also endorse it. The interests of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps in Lebanese politics are often advanced in this way by Hezbollah, thus achieving a synthesis between strategic resistance networks and smaller operational networks.

Chenoweth and Stephen also confirm this relationship with their qualitative and statistical analysis of regime-change campaigns.[33]

Spc. Kristina Truluck/U.S. Army

Humvee down after Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant attack in Mosul, Iraq 2014-06-14

While civil resistance methods are statistically correlated with successful resistance movements, the likelihood of such success is heavily influenced by the magnitude of defectors.[34] Several causal mechanisms warrant further explanation. First, regime defectors can greatly enhance the perceived viability of the resistance movement. In 1986, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Vice Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Fidel Ramos in the Philippine Army used the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) to support the political opposition movement in the Philippines.[35] With the Catholic Church's backing and Aquino's street demonstrations gaining momentum, the RAM proved to be a key element of the movement's success.[36]

Second, regime defectors can deliver critical intelligence to the movement. Such intelligence can be utilized to send surgical signals to other fence-sitters that the movement poses no threat to them or siding with the regime will harm their future position. Defection can also be subtle and nonphysical. Endorsements from existing political groups can be powerful catalysts as well.

Third, regime defectors typically can bring subordinates and equipment to the movement, which tend to be resource-poor, especially in the beginning. In the steady state, existing political groups can provide wider access to the movement with their communication platforms and constituency networks. In short, conversion is a critical mechanism to consider given how resource intensive it can be to build an effective resistance movement that can withstand the regime's superior coercive power from scratch.

Growing evidence suggests that conversion was one of the main mechanisms ISIL used to expand both in Syria and Iraq. In Iraq, Lina Khatib demonstrates how ISIL co-opted existing Sunni tribes to accelerate its expansion.[37] The rapid fall of Mosul can be partially explained by conversion in that Sunni police and soldiers had little reason to fight due to Prime Minister Nouri al-Malaki's systemic persecution of the Sunni population. ISIL continued to make local alliances to accelerate its pace of expansion.

In Syria, ISIL essentially rehired civil servants and teachers to maintain control of areas under their control as long as they agreed to use ISIL's ideology.[38]

To summarize, the effect of conversion can be profound. It can establish broad political legitimacy for the resistance movement. It can help the movement leverage or pool resources with existing organic institutions to accelerate its pace of growth. Most importantly, it can help the resistance movement become very hard for the regime to repress as such oppression is more likely to trigger a political backlash. This is what Gene Sharp calls "political Jiu-jitsu," which he defines as a process through which violent repression is exploited to elevate the legitimacy of resistance and thus garner popular support.[39]

Resource-Generation and Effects

Resistance is not cheap. It requires a wide variety of activities to gain popular support and maintain access to the population. These activities include information campaigns, publications, public demonstrations, and cultural and educational events, to name just a few. Self-sufficiency is, therefore, a critical requirement for any resistance movement. State actors can easily use official and financial means to starve dissident groups. Audits are frequently used to suppress dissident groups of financial resources. It is no surprise that robust

resistance movements such as Hamas and Hezbollah sustain themselves with a variety of legal and illegal financial and commercial enterprises.

It is convenient to think that external actors can greatly help the movement by providing the required resources to finance various activities. However, there is a big caveat: the success of resistance largely depends on its perceived legitimacy. No matter how secretive external support can be, just a single exposure can completely rob the movement of authenticity and legitimacy—this single point of failure is something the planner should be very careful about.

Successful resistance movements generally develop their own internal mechanisms to generate resources in order to avoid being perceived as a puppet of outside influence. Otpor, a Serbian resistance movement, is famous for using creative ways of generating its own resources, such as street games mocking then Serbian president Milosevic. Other movements also employ fund-raising events. Memorial services are a good example of events used by a wide variety of resistance movements. Setting up charities that accept donations from international actors is another example. Another mechanism is nesting the movement within existing groups that have built-in mechanisms of collecting and distributing membership fees for services. However, these movements use the resources to develop self-sustaining platforms instead of just focusing on acquiring kinetic capabilities. One of the first activities of Hezbollah was collecting trash, and since then, it has established diverse new social institutions, ranging from schools to hospitals.

The tree army in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, is another example of a dissident group with humble beginnings. It started as an agricultural development project led by the

Omar Siddeeq Yousif

Humble Beginnings: ANA soldiers sit in Kunar Province, home of the tree army, a militant organization that began their journey with little resources and have become a self-sustaining resistance group with the common goal of eliminating the Taliban.

Natural Resources Counterinsurgency Cell (NRCC), working under Task Force Mountain Warrior (TFMW), and it quickly became a self-sustaining resistance movement against the Taliban.[40] Key to its success was the NRCC's emphasis on imparting economic skills and codes of honor to Afghan partners, which in turn propped up the perceived legitimacy and viability of the movement.[41] Trainees were recruited only from respected families. And by working with one of the best agricultural departments in Afghanistan, the partners managed to provide essential skills and services to their home villages. Once the tree army was sufficiently developed, its network was able to drive insurgents out of the area by establishing itself as a legitimate resistance movement against the insurgency and taking over timbering from the Taliban.

Illegal timbering and smuggling lumber was one of the most profitable illegal activities financing the Taliban in Kunar Province.[42] By far, the tree army remains one of the most successful and self-sustaining resistance movements supported by the U.S. against the Taliban.

Bloc Recruitment, Mass Mobilization, and Effects

Mass mobilization mechanisms for resistance differ from individual recruitment. The pace of growth and the scale of growth must be achieved concurrently as weak movements can be easily controlled or even co-opted by the regime. This is why successful movements have empirically employed a specific mobilization mechanism called bloc recruitment. Individual recruitment and bloc recruitment are not mutually exclusive. The argument of this article is to complement existing mechanisms with historically reoccurring patterns of successful resistance movements.

Brokers who organically connect structurally disjointed groups in order to facilitate bloc recruitment play an irreplaceable role. Shin-Kap Hand provides a detailed account of how the American revolutionaries overcame internal stratification against the British Empire.[43] Paul Revere and Joseph Warren were not in leadership positions, but they provided the critical connective tissue between the thinkers and the doers of the American Revolution.[44] Similarly, single members of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, NSDAP) in the 1920s and 1930s were instrumental to the rapid expansion of the movement.[45] The primary function of the single members was to identify key influencers in existing networks and organizations in order to bring them under the NSDAP in a wholesale fashion. In other words, they were mobile brokers focusing on bloc recruitment.

A similar pattern of network development was observed in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s. Early members of Polish anti-communist opposition realized that isolated student activism was not sufficient to challenge the communist regime. Their resistance was well organized but quickly suppressed by the regime's divide and conquer tactics as students were framed as over-privileged troublemakers. Realizing this failure, Adam Michnik established civic organizations such as the Workers Defense Committee in Poland (*Komitet Obrony Robotnikkow*, KOR) and the Society of Scientific Studies (*Towarzystwo Kursow Naukowych*, TKN) in order to connect Solidarity with other clusters of resistance that did not necessarily align with each other.[46] KOR was not an overtly political organization. Its mission was to

provide legal assistance and support for jailed demonstrators and their families.[47] TKN was a mobile educational program. In practice, it was called the Flying University where academics and cultural figures organized dispersed events to discuss sensitive topics such as Polish national literature.[48]

The perceived neutrality of civil brokers was perhaps the single most important organizational innovation that key leaders engineered through trial and error. Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik learned in the 1970s that focused yet unconnected resistance could be easily neutralized by the regime's divide and conquer strategy. The success of Solidarity in the 1980s in replacing the Polish communist regime cannot be explained without taking into account the role of civic networks specifically founded to coordinate and manage a

broad coalition of dissident and existing subgroups. In other words, the notion of solidarity was built into the overall resistance landscape.

Similar dynamics were also observed in Italy during the formation of clandestine political militancy in the 1970s. Donatella della Porta meticulously shows that most dedicated members of the Red Brigades, the Proletarian Armed Groups, the Front Line, the Communist Fighting Formations, and a few other minor clandestine groups came from existing political groups and associations through interpersonal ties.[50] What della Porta empirically shows is that overt networks and affiliations play the role of a large pool composed of potential recruits who can be mobilized through existing and multiple personal ties into a more selective and cohesive subgroup. The magnitude of trust-based ties built and

Figure 2: Polish Opposition Network, 1980/1981[49]
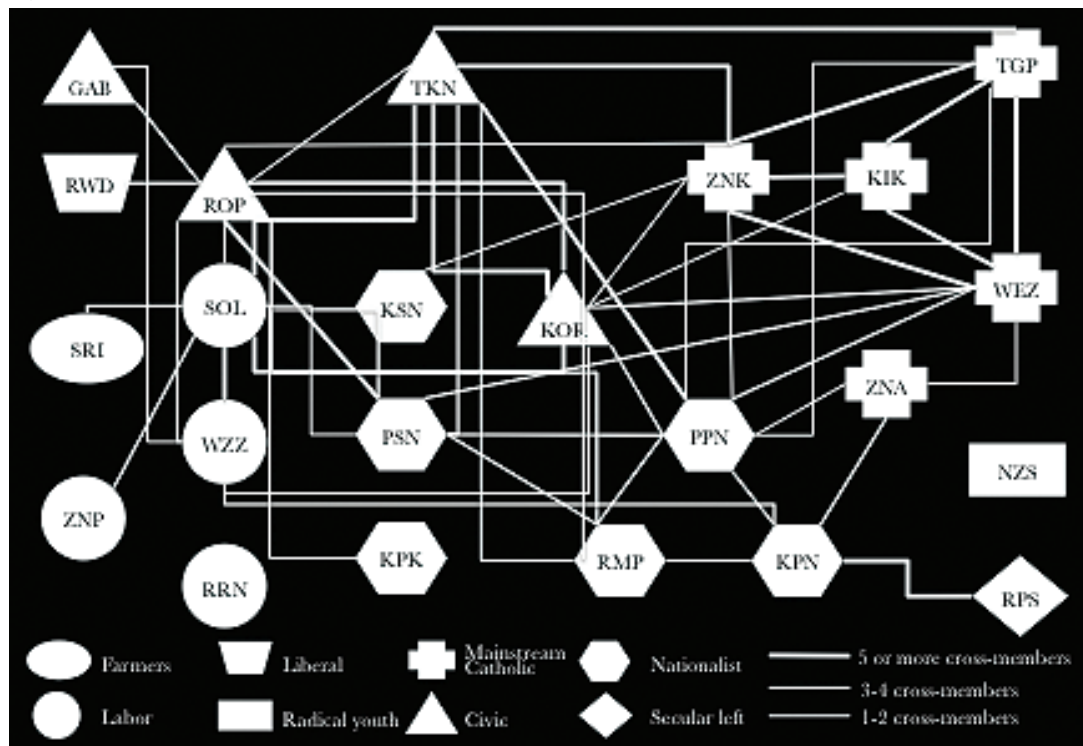
sustained in routine overt political organizations predicts the level of commitment expressed by those who joined the underground militant groups.[51]

In sum, the United States must learn how to identify and assess the potential of organic brokers in order to facilitate bloc recruitment. Learning about relational dynamics among and across existing networks is critical and is not a trivial matter. Relational information is qualitatively different from individual attributes in that the latter are used to recruit individuals, while the former informs the planner about how heterogeneous groups and networks converge or diverge along different political issues. Understanding those fault lines can be a critical factor in expanding the scope of mobilization.

Framing, Messaging, and Effects

Perhaps the most effective mechanism to achieve a rapid rate of bloc recruitment is strategic framing. Strategic framing is the process by which the movement combines grievances with political arguments regarding three frames: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational. Instead of merely reproducing existing individual grievances, strategic framing provides interpretive schemes designed to induce a shared consciousness for collective action. In fact, SOCOM stresses the need to understand and adopt culturally relevant messaging themes in order to localize information operations.[52] If political or economic dissatisfaction is the ingredient of collective action, then strategic framing is the catalyst. Snow and Benford provide four specific mechanisms of this alignment process: bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation.[53]

Frame bridging is how individual conditions are bridged to a structural issue.[54] For instance, while personal poverty may be a common economic condition, it can bridge to regime incompetence, corruption, or nepotism. The youth bulge that was exacerbated by the global recession was blamed on the corrupt and nepotistic regimes in the Middle East during the Arab Spring. In many ways, the self-immolation of Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Buazizi captured and collectivized a widespread individual grievance of economic inequality. It was not an isolated incident, but was framed as a symptom of deep-seeded structural issues affecting many like Buazizi.

Frame amplification is the technique designed to imbue the bridging frame with an active sense of agency by invoking resonating social or religious norms.[55] For instance, it can be framed that college graduates are underemployed or unemployed not because of a structural economic strain, but because the regime is actively skimming the benefits of national resources. It is well documented that ISIL and its predecessor al-Qaeda in Iraq consistently used targeted violence to amplify the latent sectarian tension between Sunni and Shia populations.[56] By accentuating and exacerbating the divide, ISIL has sought to mobilize and recruit disenfranchised Iraqi Sunnis.[57] Returning to the Arab Spring, the death of Buazizi in Tunisia and the murder of Khaled Said in Egypt were quickly amplified as state-sponsored campaigns of unbridled violence against the population.[58] Incidents of violence were quickly utilized by existing movement networks in what Wendy Pearlman calls "microfoundations of uprising."[59] These incidents were reframed as moral judgments invoking the violation of shared norms, dignity, and life. Vilification is a common technique used for frame amplification.[60] Vilification has two processes. First, it begins

with a polarization process where competitors are lumped into a generic "other" category. Second, the "other" category is repeatedly associated with socially and culturally negative traits.[61]

In frame extension the normative judgment established with the amplification process is extended to various groups within the population.[62] That is, because the regime is actively defrauding the national economy for personal greed and to satisfy its "oligarchy," it is not only college graduates but also the entire middle class that are suffering from poor economic conditions. In Tunisia, labor movements quickly seized the moment and organized nation-wide demonstrations showing solidarity. In Egypt, what started as an urban-based anti-Mubarak voice quickly became a national narrative about Egyptian national pride. By this process the claim of one group is extended to represent a broader set of social groups.

Frame transformation is the process of revitalizing a perhaps stagnating ideology. An anti-regime narrative may need to be revamped in order to earn international support or recognition. Typically, the movement may invoke a "far enemy" to justify the need to work with external actors. It is no coincidence that Solidarity's narrative aligned the Polish communist regime with the Soviet Union, just like Zawahiri went from the near enemy of the Egyptian state to the Far Enemy of the West. Perhaps this is where the Arab Spring failed to take advantage of the opening political opportunity of elections. The secular camps within the overall opposition coalition were not as well organized as the Muslim Brotherhood, thus failing to transform their "opposition narrative" to a "political narrative."

These are just a set of a few mechanisms typically employed by movements to transform individual grievances into a powerful ideology of political mobilization.[63] Once a

Figure 3: Simplified Typology of Repression

narrative is developed by codifying and disseminating it through print or online media, these mechanisms can sustain the movement very effectively. Even the current narrative of ISIL can be described in a similar fashion. While the genesis of ISIL is uniquely Iraqi Sunni, its information operations have adopted the narrative of the far enemy and vilification of the West to justify why foreigners should do whatever it takes to join the Caliphate and mobilize themselves to commit lone-wolf attacks on civilian targets.

External support can play a critical role in enhancing the movement's strategic framing. Recent research on the Arab Spring clearly indicates that external media outlets can create an echo effect to elevate the salience of certain political themes and frames.[64] Even if the regime shuts down social media or even the Internet, external communication and dissemination outside the country corresponds to elevated popular interest and support for resistance. In fact, this was not unique to the Arab Spring. Keck's and Sikkink's extensive case studies of transnational movements demonstrate how a political claim travels outside, amplified by external media outlets or epistemic communities, and then reenters the country of origin to empower the movement.[65] They call this pattern of resistance growth the "boomerang" effect.[66] Applied to resistance, an external supporter can surgically guide this well-established pattern to enhance the perceived viability of an organic opposition movement.

Conclusion

This article identifies critical conditions, mechanisms, and effects that can be utilized for supporting resistance movements. However, one environmental factor deserves additional attention. Given the definitions discussed earlier, it should be clear that modern resistance often takes place in politically austere environments. This means sponsoring resistance should factor in substantial measures of regime repression. Thus, it is necessary to examine some of the typical obstacles to sustained collective action in order to identify what traits to look for when looking for resistance movements to sponsor.

A resistance movement challenging the government or occupying force is most likely to face a multitude of repressive efforts. Figure 3 represents a simple typology of state repression. While state repression can be categorized in multiple ways, typically it can be conceptualized by two factors: scope of repression and method of repression. Vertically it ranges from kinetic to nonkinetic and, laterally, it ranges from collective to individual. Four types of repression are commonly used against opposition movements: leadership targeting, leadership cooptation, resource control, and delegitimation.[67] This typology should work as a check list for planners to factor in what types of support organic resistance movements would need in order to withstand regime repression and survive.

When a resistance movement or insurgency challenges a regime, the latter will first try to remove the leaders by arresting or killing them. However, decapitation rarely leads to organizational collapse of insurgent or terrorist movements.[68] When leadership targeting is not sufficient or successful, the regime will often employ resource control measures to starve the challengers.[69] These include shutting down social institutions, audits, and financial sanctions. In addition, regimes will often try to divide and disrupt movements through nonlethal means. Such efforts include

cooptation, infiltration, reintegration promises, and selective incentives.

If a resistance movement is to succeed in coercing or disrupting its targeted regime, it becomes critical for the former to have organic capabilities that can be utilized to withstand and overcome state repression. Historically, movements typically acquire these capabilities by employing various nonkinetic and nonviolent activities such as providing essential services and organizing public events to garner popular support.[70] This is why this article highlights the processes used by insurgents to develop organic political support, resource independence, organizational resiliency, and ideological legitimacy. These processes can be found across different environments ranging from East and Central Asia to the Middle East.[71] This resiliency often stems from a coalition of multiple networks. This multiplicity may carry an operational liability. However, it is the same factors that give resistance a diffused and broad "attribution" characteristic: repression on one is an attack on everyone. Social movement theory calls this mechanism the "repression backfire."[72]

The regime will typically have more coercive capacity than the resistance movement. It is common to think that lethal aid is what resistance needs to compete with the regime's military and security forces. Lethal aid may prove effective against weakened or fragile regimes, but not against mature autocratic regimes such as North Korea, China, Iran, or Russia. Lethal assistance also carries a hefty political price.

Social movement literature suggests that what enables the movement to compete effectively against the regime is not how well it fights with brute force, which is typically expressed as guerilla warfare. Rather, it is the political, economic, social, and ideological foundations built during the steady state that enable the movement to deflect regime repression and turn it into a rallying point.[73] Resistance movements succeed when they can strategically employ both lethal and nonlethal methods instead of relying on a single strategy. When resistance movements are not balanced, they often lead to undesirable strategic consequences, such as was the case of the Nicaraguan Contras, where neither the surrogates nor the sponsor achieved their respective objective.[74] If resistance is to be employed as a strategic tool for advancing national security goals, the United States must carefully factor in the intricate dynamics between conditions, mechanisms, and effects. Tactics of guerilla warfare are no longer sufficient to inform us how to harness the strategic nature of resistance. PRISM

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Photos

Moro Islamic Liberation Front members travel down a river in Maguindanao, Philippines.

The SOF Experience in the Philippines and the Implications for Future Defense Strategy

BY LINDA ROBINSON

United States special operations forces (SOF) have engaged in a number of long-duration missions around the globe in the last 15 years. One of those, *Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines* (OEF-P), epitomized the type of partnered, light footprint approach that recent defense strategy guidance has called for as a way to defend U.S. national security interests and promote global stability without incurring the crushing cost or unwanted side effects of large-scale military interventions.[1] The requirements for success through this approach, and the limits of its application, have been a matter of ongoing debate. Some skepticism derives from doubts about the will, probity and/or basic capability of the host or partner nations that the United States has tried to buttress. Another source of skepticism has been the apparent inefficacy of the U.S. approach to building partner capacity, as illustrated most prominently by the Iraqi army's disintegration in 2014 after more than $20 billion in U.S. assistance from 2003-2011, and by the difficulties the Afghan army has encountered in taking on the Taliban as the U.S. forces have drawn down.[2] An exception in both of these cases has been the Iraqi and Afghan special operations forces, which have demonstrated notably greater capability and fortitude. These elite units were intensively trained, advised, and assisted by U.S. and coalition special operations forces over the course of a decade, which suggests that there may be some valuable and possibly fungible lessons to learn from the way in which SOF approaches this mission.

The U.S. special operations forces' 14-year engagement in OEF-P offers a case in which U.S. SOF were the primary outside force supporting a partner nation's security forces. While conventional forces played supporting roles in the effort, and non-military entities such as the U.S.

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Agency for International Development (USAID) carried out parallel programs, U.S. SOF were the architects of the overall design and execution of the U.S. counterterrorism (CT) program carried out in the southern Philippines. The Philippine government and armed forces were not only active players but the leading actors in the entire endeavor. This case thus provides a reasonably good laboratory in which to view the effects of this approach to building partner capacity in order to defeat terrorist threats. The U.S. Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, instituted in 2015, rests on the premise that at least some U.S. CT programs can be carried out in this fashion.[3]

OEF-P was aimed at enabling the Philippine security forces to combat transnational terrorist groups in the restive southern region of Mindanao. After an initial phase in which 1,300 U.S. forces arrived in the region to help the Philippine military hunt down terrorists who had taken U.S. citizens and other foreigners hostage, U.S. forces thereafter averaged 500-600 at any one time. These forces did not enter into combat—perhaps the most critical difference distinguishing this case from Afghanistan and Iraq, where U.S. SOF engaged in combat alongside their local partners. This noncombat rule was also applied in Colombia, another long-duration SOF mission to bolster the ability of Colombia to fight the narcoterrorist *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). The U.S. forces in the Philippines did, however, provide an array of services and assets in direct support of Philippine operations in close proximity to the front lines. This mode of training, advising, and assisting—including direct support for forces in combat—has become the norm in the current fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In some cases, U.S. SOF are permitted to undertake direct action raids, but in Iraq U.S. forces are alongside Iraqi special operations forces at the request of the Iraqi government. Many aspects of this current playbook hew closely to U.S. doctrine for foreign internal defense as adapted for counterterrorism missions in OEF-P.

The following account summarizes the key elements of OEF-P including the campaign design, the evolution of the campaign through five periods from 2001 to 2014, the campaign results and evidence of its impact, an assessment of the factors that contributed to and limited the campaigns success, and finally a consideration of the applicability of this case to U.S. counterterrorism policy and defense strategy more generally.

OEF-P Campaign Design and Adaptation

After the 9/11 attacks the U.S. and Philippine governments agreed to strengthen their cooperative counterterrorism efforts. The Philippine government invited the United States to assist in addressing threats in the southern Philippines, which has long been plagued by unrest and socioeconomic problems. The Muslim minority of the largely Catholic population is concentrated in the southern islands of the archipelago nation, which had been beset by a secessionist movement, the Moro National Liberation Front. The Philippine government created semiautonomous zones following a 1996 accord with that group, but continued talks with a splinter group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Yet another faction, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), allied itself with al-Qaeda and engaged in numerous attacks and kidnappings of U.S. citizens and other foreigners. Due to their transnational terrorist character, ASG, as well as elements of the

Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) extremist group operating in the Philippines, became the focus of U.S. counterterrorism assistance to the Philippine forces. This nexus with al-Qaeda provided the basis for the U.S. authorization and funding for the 14-year U.S. operation, which became known as Operation *Enduring Freedom-Philippines*.[4]

The mutually agreed upon rules of engagement prohibited any U.S. combat roles, although U.S. SOF were permitted to be armed and to use force in self-defense if necessary. This ban on U.S. combat set the parameters and the tone for the entire effort: it was to be carried out primarily by the Philippines with the U.S. forces in support. The Philippine government and its armed forces were in the lead of every activity, and the U.S. forces and government never acted unilaterally. According to numerous participants in the mission, these rules of engagement prevented the type of mission creep that occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan, where U.S. forces took the lead with nominal participation by the local partners.[5]

In the fall of 2001, U.S. special operations forces traveled to the Philippines to conduct an initial assessment under the leadership of Colonel David Fridovich that, with the participation of the Philippine government, evaluated the population, physical terrain, and socioeconomic conditions of the southern island of Basilan to aid in their mission analysis and planning. Following the initial assessment, Joint Task Force 510 (JTF-510), a special operations-led task force, deployed in February 2002 to conduct Operation *Balikatan 02-1* that provided civil-military operations, information operations, and training, advice, and assistance to security forces.[6] This triad of civil-military operations, information operations, and training, advice, and assistance is the traditional package of special operations activities employed in foreign internal defense (FID)[7] by Civil Affairs units, Military Information Support Operations units (MISO), and Special Forces.

Following the initial assessment, JTF-510 deployed to the Philippines under the command of Lieutenant General Donald Wurster, then commander of Special Operations Command-Pacific based in Hawaii. The U.S. force numbered almost 1,300 personnel, including Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs, MISO, Naval Construction Brigade (CB) engineers, and Navy SEALs who provided training, advice, and assistance in maritime as well as land operations. The Air Force provided overhead surveillance assets, airlift, and medical teams. The Air Force Special Operations Command also provided advisors in later years. Among the operational advice and assistance rendered during the initial six months, JTF-510 provided intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support as well as direct advisory support to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in the tracking and maritime raid that led to the death of then-ASG leader Abu Sabaya in June 2002.

Colonel Fridovich and JTF-510 developed a plan that focused on establishing security, promoting economic development, and ensuring the sustainment of the effort. The Civil Affairs units and engineers dug wells, established clinics, and built roads that supported the military effort and provided access to and greater understanding of the population and its concerns. These initial activities also began to encourage the population to look at the AFP and the Philippine government as a source of assistance rather than harassment or neglect. The Philippine soldiers began to be welcomed

in the towns they visited. This focus on the population was central to the effort: U.S. SOF developed a population and resources control handbook to guide its efforts and those of the AFP in understanding the grievances, mapping the insurgent support networks, and preventing material support to enemy activity. In combat operations, the U.S. SOF provided tactical battlefield advice, intelligence from unmanned aerial vehicles, casualty evacuation, and first aid.

In addition to this activity on Basilan, the U.S. SOF had begun an effort to build a Philippine counterterrorist capability in the form of the Light Reaction Battalion, which over the years would grow to company and then regimental size. U.S. SOF assisted the Philippine army at its Fort Magsaysay base in Luzon, north of Manila, to devise a selection course and training modules that drew from their own courses at Fort Bragg.

OEF-P Campaign Design: Lines of Operations

(1) Training, advising, and assisting Philippine security forces (PSF), including the provision of direct support and intelligence
(2) Conducting civil–military operations (CMO)
(3) Conducting information operations (IO)

After JTF-510 redeployed, a brief hiatus ensued in 2002 as the two governments negotiated the terms of ongoing assistance, although short-term joint combined exercise training continued as discussions were under way with U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM). A PACOM proposal for a large force that would engage in combat was rejected by the Philippine government, revealing the still-strong nationalist sensitivities of the Philippines, a one-time colony that closed U.S. bases in the 1990s. The decision was reached for a small-footprint approach that would be led for the next decade by the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P), which was commanded by an Army Special Forces colonel or a Navy SEAL captain (O-6 rank) officer on a yearlong tour. The JSOTF-P oversaw tactical advisory units deployed continuously on shorter rotations to train, advise, and assist a variety of Philippine military units. Over the years, many of the same special operators returned for four or five tours.

In 2005, the AFP focus, with the U.S. forces in support, turned to Jolo island, where ASG leaders went after the 2002 operation in Basilan. Initially, the Philippine military adopted a heavy-handed approach, and U.S. SOF were immersed in learning new terrain and a new population with a legacy of fierce resistance to outsiders. After readjustment to emphasize the civil affairs approach that had brought results in Basilan, the AFP began to make headway. Top ASG leaders were subsequently killed in 2006-2007. The Philippine military formed units to carry out civil affairs to provide services in neglected areas and conduct information activities to discredit the terrorists and gain support for the government. U.S. MISO units developed communications products including leaflets that advertised rewards for information on local insurgents and the various programs that were being carried out by the Philippine forces and government. During this period U.S. SOF began supporting naval units and extending its reach throughout the Sulu archipelago, including the island of Tawi Tawi which had, up until that point, functioned as a safe haven and conduit

for illicit funds and advisers from Malaysia. In addition, a resurgence of ASG attacks in Basilan prompted the Philippine military and U.S. SOF to redeploy there in 2007.

In the next phase from 2008-2010, the U.S. effort became more distributed as SOF established planning and operations fusion cells in 15 locations in Mindanao, including the Central Mindanao region where ASG and JI elements had found refuge. U.S. SOF also began a multi-year effort to improve the Philippine air force capability in areas such as close air support, forward air observers, and precision munitions delivery. In the 2010-2012 period, significant adaptations in the campaign included a new focus on training and advising special police units (Philippine National Police Special Action Force) and increasing police-military collaboration through fusion centers throughout the Mindanao region. The U.S. Department of Justice also provided police training and mentoring in such skills as preventive and investigative techniques.

In these latter years of the mission, U.S. SOF increased its collaboration with U.S. Embassy personnel and programs significantly. The JSOTF-P effort joined with a broader interagency approach to security in the southern Philippines. The Country Assistance Strategy of 2009-2013 articulated several U.S. government objectives in support of the Philippine government's national plan. The stated U.S. goal was to support a more stable, prosperous, and well-governed Philippines that was no longer a haven for foreign terrorist

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U.S. Army Soldiers, Armed Forces Philippines Soldiers, and Philippine National Police officers participate in a humanitarian mission in Mindanao.

Campaign Adaptations and Inflection Points

2001 - Groundwork laid through assessment and host nation terms of reference

2002-04 - Basilan operations conducted by JTF-510, follow-on formation of JSOTF-P to support Philippine SOF and conventional force operations

2005-07 - Jolo and Sulu Archipelago (Operation *Ultimatum*)

2008-10 – Expansion to Central Mindanao and Precision Guided Munitions program (high point of geographically distributed footprint)

2010-12 - Transition to higher-level advisory roles, advise and assist special police units and military-police integration, and institutionalized interagency coordination

2012-14 – Transition planning, including risk mitigation and preparation for embassy-based functions

organizations. To that end, it pledged continued support for counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, defense institutional reform, and the transitioning of the internal security mission from the AFP to the Philippine National Police.[8] U.S. development aid was also largely directed to the southern region. Roughly 60 percent of some $80 million in annual U.S. economic assistance was devoted to Mindanao. The largest program, Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM), totaled $180.9 million between 2002 and 2012 and was aimed in part at providing training and

employment for demobilized fighters. A follow-on grant of $127.7 million began in 2012 to support the Mindanao Peace and Development Program. Specific projects included medium- and small- scale infrastructure, workforce preparation, small business development (such as fish farming), and governance improvement.

To provide the needed connectivity for this interagency effort, special operators were also detailed to the U.S. Embassy in Manila. With a few exceptions, the four career ambassadors who successively led the U.S. mission in Manila strongly supported and guided the overall effort. Two manifestations of the growing interagency cooperation were the Law Enforcement Working Group and the Mindanao Working Group (MWG), both formed and led by the U.S. country team. The first group, led by State Department representatives from the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) bureau, oversaw integration of the various law enforcement and rule of law initiatives that the U.S. government was supporting in the Philippines. The Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program provided personnel and conducted police training in Mindanao. JSOTF-P provided facilities and security to support their efforts, and hosted a full-time USAID representative at its headquarters in Camp Navarro in Zamboanga, the capital of Mindanao.

The other major adaptation of the later years of OEF-P was a shift from primarily tactical and operational level advisory support to institutional and ministerial level support aimed at preparing the AFP for sustaining its own efforts as the U.S. mission wound down. At the theater command, Western Mindanao Command in Zamboanga, U.S. SOF supported

the development of an intelligence fusion center and campaign assessment products. At Fort Magsaysay, U.S. SOF helped establish or expand headquarters for the army's special operations command and the elite Joint Special Operations Group. In Manila, JSOTF-P provided advisors and liaisons to assist in developing plans, strategies, and modernization efforts at the general headquarters and defense ministry. The JSOTF-P also emphasized police-military coordination through fusion centers around Mindanao and police training.

Perhaps the most significant factor in the successful results achieved was the formulation of a host nation national security plan, Plan Bayanihan, to address the security problems of the southern Philippines. The existence of such a plan is indicative of the country's own will and organizational capacity to tackle its problems. This is a fundamental pillar of the U.S. doctrinal approach to foreign internal defense—that it be conducted in support of a government that has framed and is implementing an Internal Defense and Development Plan. As the effort matured, the Philippine government developed such a plan, called Bayanihan or the Internal Peace and Security Plan. Under Bayanihan, the government called for a whole of society approach to resolving the conflicts in the country and shifted its focus to increasing the capacity of the police and transitioning the lead responsibility for internal security to the Philippine National Police.[9] This plan was complemented by concerted efforts to reach a negotiated settlement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to extend the terms of an earlier accord. A follow-on peace accord was eventually concluded and some demobilization commenced; the

ensuing legislation proposed to implement the accord has not passed the legislature to date.

In September 2013, in what some U.S. SOF regarded as a real-world "graduation exercise" to test the years of training and mentoring, the Philippine military and government confronted a major challenge in Mindanao in the form of a complex urban assault on its capital, Zamboanga, by a splinter faction known as the Rogue Moro National Liberation Front. Intense fighting ensued and many hostages were taken. The Philippine president, Benigno Aquino, flew to the city to oversee the combined police-military operations to end the siege and hostage stand-off. The Philippine National Police Special Action Forces (PNP SAF) trained by the U.S. SOF performed well, as did the Special Operations Forces and other military units. U.S. SOF were not directly involved in the operation, though they observed the Philippine command meetings and, as the conflict surrounded their base, they were permitted to monitor the AFP operations and fly unmanned aerial vehicles for force protection.

PACOM had been debating for some time whether the Philippine forces were sufficiently capable to warrant drawing down the program. For several years, the JSOTF-P and its parent command in Hawaii, the Special Operations Command Pacific, had been preparing for transition. The threat from ASG had diminished but not disappeared, and as the JSOTF-P commander prepared to close down the Camp Navarro headquarters, he devised several options for mitigating the ongoing risks. Because U.S. Embassy programs had relied on U.S. military and contract air and U.S. SOF ground transportation to move around Mindanao and oversee its programs, alternative arrangements were needed. The Philippine

military was not eager to see the U.S. SOF mission depart, particularly after a severe setback in Central Mindanao in early 2015 in which PNP SAF troops were killed. JSOTF-P nonetheless officially ended its operations in February 2015. Over the preceding months, outstations were closed and the staff drawn down. Since then, ongoing advisory assistance is provided through SOF posted at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, as well as periodic training exercises by U.S. SOF and conventional forces.

Campaign Results

Although ASG still exists and poses a threat, as evidenced by the recent kidnapping and killing of two foreigners, the 14-year effort to bolster the Philippine security forces' ability to counter transnational terrorism may be considered successful by several measures. In terms of the impact on the adversary, enemy-initiated attacks in the ASG's three primary areas of operation declined 56 percent between 2000 and 2012.[10] The areas in which they enjoyed relative freedom of movement also declined in this same period according to Special Operations Command–Pacific officials interviewed by the author. Finally, the estimated number of militants in the ASG declined from some 1,270 to 437.[11]

In terms of the impact on the Philippine population and armed forces, independent polling conducted for U.S. SOF and the U.S. Embassy shows that support for the Philippine security forces in southern Mindanao increased from 51 percent to 63 percent and support for ASG declined from 8 percent to 2.5 percent. A wide range of Philippine officials and U.S. military sources interviewed judged that the capability of Philippine armed forces had increased over the period of OEF-P. The argument could be made that AFP might have achieved this progress on its own, but interviewees pointed to the acquisition or increase in specific capabilities such as intelligence, close air support, precision-guided munitions, and land and maritime special operations. Similarly, U.S. SOF provided support in writing doctrine, training materials, and institutional development of civil affairs and information operations. One assessment found that special operations forces were relatively more capable in conducting their operations than units that were not trained by SOF.[12]

Finally, beyond the effects that U.S. SOF achieved in helping the Philippines reduce the transnational terrorist threat and increase its security force capabilities, the JSOTF-P mission contributed to an overall enhancement of the U.S-Philippine military and overall bilateral relationship. Although Philippine concerns about Chinese encroachment in the South China Sea likely constituted the principal impetus for the recent agreements to allow U.S. forces to base in the Philippines, an argument can be made that U.S.-Philippine relations grew stronger throughout the past 15 years in part due to the provision of U.S. SOF advice and assistance. The two countries signed an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement in 2014 and subsequently agreed to resume basing U.S. forces in the Philippines 25 years after the closure of the Clark and Subic Bay bases.

Contributing and Limiting Factors

Our recent study concluded that four principal factors contributed to the success that OEF-P did achieve.

- Maintaining a sovereign lead avoided U.S. dependency. According to the terms negotiated with the Philippine government at the outset, the Philippine government and

armed forces retained overall control of the mission throughout OEF-P. U.S. forces operated in support of Philippine forces and did not conduct combat operations, unilateral or otherwise. This not only ensured ongoing host nation support but, just as importantly, avoided the development of dependency on U.S. forces. Such dependency can be a cause of mission failure after transition.

■ Campaign design was assessment driven. The U.S. SOF campaign design relied upon regular assessment and adaptation, in a textbook application of design theory. From the first assessment conducted by Colonel Fridovich, the initial plan and subsequent adaptations were based upon JSOTF-P assessments to determine current conditions and effects of operations. The basic campaign design remained intact, ensuring

continuity of approach in accordance with FID doctrine. Each adaptation responded to new conditions or host nation requirements to achieve greater capability and thus mission success.

■ U.S. SOF operations were sustained and synergistic and applied across the needed spectrum of Philippine forces, not just their SOF units. In some other cases, U.S. SOF have focused narrowly on counterterrorist units to the exclusion of other forces critical to achieving success on the battlefield. U.S. SOF did conduct their most intensive training, advising, and assistance of Philippine SOF units (particularly the Light Reaction Regiment, the Joint Special Operations Group, and the Naval Special Operations Group), but they also provided a lower but consistent level of training, advising, and

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A U.S. Navy sailor and an Armed Forces Philippines soldier unload a box of humanitarian aid from USAID on Panay Island, demonstrating interagency and international cooperation.

assistance to a wide range of army, navy, marine, and air force units, and every echelon of command involved in the southern Mindanao campaign. As the primary theater for operations within the Philippines, most units cycle through the region in their training. Critically, the train, advise, and assist mission extended beyond training on bases to include operational assistance with direct support to units in the field, including the provision of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, medevac, and combat advice at the division, brigade, battalion, and, occasionally, company level. As noted in the opening section, the campaign design included heavy reliance on civil-military operations and information operations as well as support to building those capabilities within the Philippines armed forces. In the later phases of the campaign, increased emphasis was placed on creating fusion cells at higher echelons of command in Mindanao to foster intelligence sharing and police-military operational coordination. Finally, institutional development of forces and support to national military planning was also a focus of the later years of the campaign.

■   Interagency cooperation is often stated as an objective and achieved to varying degrees. In the OEF-P campaign, the JSOTF-P benefited from the fact that four career ambassadors led the U.S. country team for the duration. These experienced and distinguished senior foreign service officers brought a wealth of knowledge and stature to the job of civilian-military coordination. While their responsibilities leading one of the largest missions in Asia spanned a far greater range of duties than overseeing coordination for OEF-P, the ambassadors

traveled to southern Mindanao, engaged the senior Philippine leadership at appropriate times, and oversaw an increasing amount of coordination between the civilian country team and the JSOTF-P command group. A particularly productive relationship was formed between SOF and the long-serving USAID Mission Director, and placement of liaisons in the embassy and the JSOTF-P headquarters aided connectivity. The embassy's Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) handles the wide portfolio of security assistance including military sales and exercises (to include SOF's Joint Combine Exercise Training or JCET program), which necessitated close coordination to ensure synergy where possible. In particular, JCETs became the follow-on mechanism for sustained contact after OEF-P ended.

Several factors limited the overall success of OEF-P. One of those factors was the continued heavy emphasis on tactical-level training, advice, and assistance in the early years of the mission. The consequence was a delayed focus on the higher-echelon commands and institutional development, a delay that might have prolonged the mission or produced slower results. Second, interviewees noted that some of the Philippine government's decisions on platforms and other military purchases were not ideal for the conduct of a counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaign. Third, the AFP capability remains limited in some respects, primarily in the basic training of conventional units, which suggests that the U.S. advisory support and the force generation and training model adopted by the Philippine armed forces may not be sufficiently effective. Finally, the

conflict drivers in the southern Philippines remain, due to political and socioeconomic grievances and the ability of extremist groups to find recruits among the population. The Philippine government over the past two decades has assiduously pursued negotiations with the Moro separatist groups, but splinter factions allied to al-Qaeda and now ISIL appear to win continued, if marginal, support. Although small, these factions retain their ability to conduct terrorist acts and deliberately target foreigners for maximum global impact.

Broader Lessons for Counterterrorism and Defense Policy

Several factors do set the OEF-P case apart from other recent U.S. attempts to support partners and conduct security operations through them. The most obvious factor is that the Philippine government possesses a relatively high level of functionality compared to Yemen and Somalia, which have been engulfed in civil war and practically operated without any functioning government at all. The Philippine government has experienced its share of problems, to include coup attempts and high levels of corruption, and it has generally devoted fewer resources to the troubled south. Yet by a number of indices it stands at a higher level of functionality. More importantly perhaps, the government has found the will to address its problems through a variety of programs, military and nonmilitary, even if they have not achieved their full objectives. Some level of functionality and some level of will are certainly baseline requirements for a partnered approach to work. Setting the bar too high, on the other hand, may deprive this policy approach of the opportunity to produce results. The U.S. security and economic training and assistance programs for El Salvador in

the 1980s and Colombia in the 1990s were highly controversial due to concerns about democratic rule, human rights abuses, and corruption. Yet both of those governments experienced notable improvements in both security and governance over the decade of U.S. assistance.

Another factor limiting the generalizability of the Philippine case is the almost uniquely close U.S.-Philippine relationship on a cultural level. Many Filipinos speak English, intermarriage rates are high, and many Filipinos have been educated in the United States or emigrated there. The ties that bind the two countries are rooted in the history of the Spanish-American war, and the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese occupation. Notwithstanding the intense feelings of nationalism that at times complicate personal and political relationships, this foundation provides a great many benefits in training, advising, and assisting the Philippine security forces.

Another factor that may well have amplified the effect of the OEF-P mission and the long-term presence of U.S. SOF was the fact that many Philippine officers who served in SOF units and formed close ties with U.S. SOF ascended to senior levels in the armed forces and defense ministry. The Philippine government has routinely promoted generals from its special operations units to the top positions in the army and then incorporated them into the civilian service after their uniformed careers end. In addition, as noted, many Philippine officers served one or more tours in Mindanao and therefore likely had some contact with U.S. SOF. This provided an opportunity for U.S. SOF to have an influence on the Philippine military in greater proportion than their small numbers might suggest.

Despite these factors, the basic elements of OEF-P can arguably provide the broad contours of a model for partnered counterterror-

forces, and a State Department contracted training company all played roles in stabilizing East Africa. This operation also served as a

Figure 1: A Model for Building and Employing Effective Partnered Operations in Complex Conflicts[13]
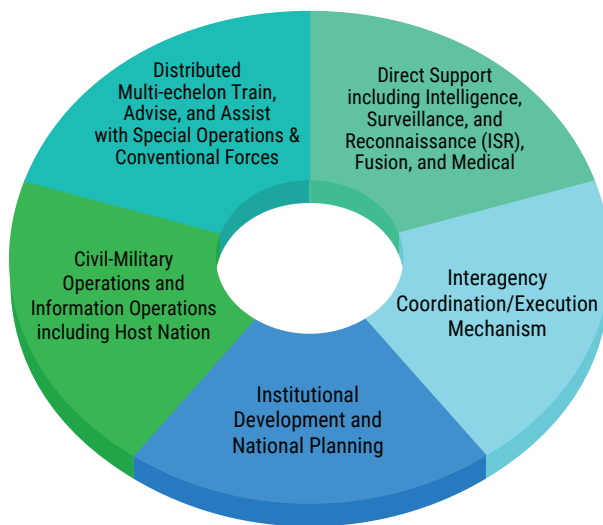
ism operations, which uses a full-spectrum approach to foreign internal defense that is negotiated with the partner nation government. This basic model has the following elements:

The model, of course, is not universally applicable and would need to be adapted to the local conditions and, critically, the sovereign government's wishes. In the absence of a functioning government, a multinational effort with international approval may be able to serve as the "partner." This was the case in East Africa—absence of a government in Somalia did not prevent progress via the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), a peace enforcement operation approved by the United Nations and overseen by the African Union, whose member countries contributed the forces. U.S. SOF, conventional

platform for counterterrorism efforts aimed at al-Qaeda in East Africa and al-Shabaab.

Some programs have been less effective because they have been implemented in a sporadic or less intensive manner than required; have focused on capacity building without the operational advisory component; and/or because the interagency contributions to governance and development have been lacking. For example, the State Department has overseen counterterrorism programs in both East and West Africa for many years, but they have not produced the desired results overall. The decade-long Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership was carried out at a low-level, mostly through sporadic SOF training and exercises of discrete units rather than as a comprehensive campaign with a persistent presence. There is now reason to focus on

designing an appropriately robust and integrated approach, as northwest Africa has become a much greater focus of interest, due to the multiple combined destabilizing influences of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the chaos of post-Qadhafi Libya, and the rise of Boko Haram as a cross-border armed threat. France has become significantly involved, providing an additional source of commitment, resources, and manpower to partnered counterterrorism. Additionally, the European Union has launched a UN-approved training mission in Mali. This formula might be followed in Libya if the fledgling government survives and comes to the conclusion that it will need help with its many security needs, including creating a new military and securing the country against transnational terrorists.

Other examples of partial successes include Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. SOF trained and operated alongside Iraqi and Afghan Special Operations Forces who proved to be the most competent and professional units in those two countries. Two critical factors accounting for those successes were intensive mentoring and force generation models built on the Special Forces' own selection and training techniques. Iraqi and Afghan Special Operations Forces currently select and train their own troops with minimal input from the U.S. mentors. But too many other elements of the overall effort to build functioning Afghan and Iraqi institutions for security, governance, and development have lagged, so overall the campaigns did not produce the desired results. By contrast, the decade-long effort in Colombia to build and employ security forces capable of countering powerful drug trafficking and insurgent groups was a resounding success, alongside substantial progress in development and local governance. Credit for this latter success must be apportioned between the strong will and effort of the Colombian government and the full-spectrum supporting efforts of U.S. State Department, USAID, and military programs. In Colombia as in the Philippines, the intensive training, advising, and mentoring provided by U.S. SOF did not include combat advising, though it did include substantial financial and technical support to building a rotary wing capability that was vital to combat in the Andean highlands and trackless jungles.

A few other basic principles emerge from examination of the OEF-P experience. These include:

■ A relatively long-term commitment is required to produce results. Making such a commitment requires an assessment that U.S. interests merit the investment. However, these investments are less costly in the long run than major military interventions, and they have produced results in areas that are not typically considered zones of "vital" U.S. interests.

■ As the U.S. president's representative, the support of the U.S. ambassador and country team is vital for any such effort to be undertaken. Moreover, the embassy serves as the primary interlocutor with the host nation government and the country team supplies vital non-military assets to what is rarely a purely military effort.

■ Foreign internal defense must be conducted in support of an internal defense and development plan that is crafted and embraced by the host nation government. That government's commitment to developing capabilities and addressing the sources of conflict is a sine qua non for success. Development of security capability alone will empower the military in ways

potentially counterproductive to democratic governance, so a mix of development, governance, and security programs will usually be required.

■ Partner capacity is very often in need of bolstering at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of the relevant security institutions. A multi-echelon and multi-functional approach to building partner capacity will provide the most sustainable and effective capability. Creating CT units alone will provide little enduring capability if there are no capable "hold" forces, professional police able to conduct evidence-based operations and community policing, a functional judicial system, logistical capabilities, command structures with trained staff, or institutions capable of training, resourcing, and managing the array of forces needed.

■ Civil Affairs and military information support operations (MISO) have the potential to perform missions above the tactical level and should be routinely incorporated into advisory missions. These are valuable military assets that can shape the nonmilitary and non-kinetic aspects of the conflict, as many ambassadors have found in recent years. These small teams at embassies or SOF nodes have helped to identify and address grievances and other drivers of terrorist recruitment and instability.

■ Command and control (C2) of persistent, distributed operations should be located forward to the extent possible. A distributed C2 structure that places field-grade officers in the relevant country or region is the best way to gain and maintain situational awareness, connectivity with

Philippine National Police members train with U.S. Army Special Forces.

interagency and host partners, and the ability to assess and adapt in a timely manner.

■   A SOF presence in U.S. embassies of relevant countries is desirable to achieve the needed interagency cooperation. Military career paths should permit or even encourage SOF liaison assignments without prejudice to individual careers. Achieving increased synergy between security assistance and security force assistance activities should be a priority to ensure that the training and advisory functions are complemented by the needed types of material assistance.

■   The smallest footprint that can execute the mission is most desirable, but to achieve effects the presence must be continuous. Sporadic engagement may be a significant factor in the lack of results achieved in cases such as West Africa. The size of the SOF footprint and the rhythm of engagement should not overwhelm either the interagency partners or the host nation.

■   Every plan requires a transition. Skepticism over the utility of building and using partners gains traction when partners never graduate to self-sufficiency. Thus, plans should be grounded in specific goals and timelines that estimate the speed at which a given partner can progress. The plan should have distinct phases including: an initial thorough-going assessment; a second phase in which SOF and others assume the lead in training and producing an indigenous training cadre; a third phase in which the training cadre assumes responsibility for the primary activity; a fourth phase in which SOF's intensive advisory and assistance role gives way to an observer role; and, finally, a transition phase in which periodic visits are used to ensure that the desired capability is being maintained locally and employed according to plan. Many participants remarked on the slow winding down of OEF-P over a period of years, but a gradual tapering off carries far less risk than the opposite course, as was seen in Iraq and is currently under debate in the U.S. and NATO mission in Afghanistan.

U.S. policy guidance places ample and appropriate weight on the need to achieve U.S. national security objectives as much as possible through allies, partners, and friends (who may even be informal militias). This is a cost-effective and historically sound approach to maintaining global peace and stability; indeed U.S. alliances and partnerships have undergirded the world order fashioned since the end of World War II. However, the actual conduct of security force assistance as part of integrated civilian-military campaigns has received less emphasis in U.S. military education and training. The on-the-job training and ad hoc innovations of the past 15 years are rapidly receding from memory as budget cuts have eliminated the structures and as senior leaders retire from the force.

To ensure that viable, cost-effective, scalable models are developed and further refined, greater attention will be needed on the part of both the institutional and operational force. The lessons and techniques that special operations forces have developed can be readily adopted and applied by other military and civilian agencies working in concert. There are additional lessons still to be mined from other quarters, civilian, military, and foreign. Those still engaged in campaigns in Iraq, Syria, Africa, and elsewhere require this focused support to aid their own efforts at holistic approaches to complex conflicts. The era of large-footprint, trillion-dollar

counterinsurgency campaigns has ended, and the new era of cost-effective approaches to security still remains to be firmly set on a steady course. PRISM

Notes

1 The National Military Strategy of the United States 2015 states that "we are working with allies and partners to deter, deny, and – when necessary – defeat potential state adversaries. Concurrently, we are leading multiple coalition efforts to disrupt, degrade, and defeat VEOs [violent extremist organizations]." "The United States Military's Contribution to National Security," June 2015, <www.jcs.mil>. The same reliance on partners was articulated in the February 2015 National Security Strategy released by the White House and the 2012 defense strategic guidance, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense."

2 Loveday Morris and Missy Ryan, "After more than $1.6 billion, Iraqi army still struggles," *The Washington Post*, June 10, 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraqs-army-is-still-a-mess-two-years-after-a-stunning-defeat/2016/06/09/0867f334-1868-11e6-971a-dadf9ab18869_story.html>.

3 The Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund provides support and assistance to foreign security forces or other groups or individuals to conduct, support, or facilitate counterterrorism and crisis response activities pursuant to section 1534 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015. $800 million and $1.1 billion in funds were enacted for FY2015 and FY 2016 respectively, and $1 billion was requested for FY 2017. Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, February 2016, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), <http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY2017_CTPF_J-Book.pdf>.

4 The Philippine government also faces an ongoing threat from the communist New People's Army, which seeks to overthrow the government. Although much diminished in strength and numbers, this threat remains a preoccupation for the government. While the U.S. assistance did not address that threat, the Armed Forces of the Philippines reassigned units trained by the U.S. Special Operations Forces to other areas of the country to address it. This example illustrates the reality that U.S. interests, which were focused on globally-linked terrorist movements, may not entirely coincide with a partner nation's assessment of its own interests.

5 The author interviewed approximately 150 participants in OEF-P in research for the Joint Special

Operations University and for the recent RAND publication, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines*, 2001-2014, by Linda Robinson, Patrick B. Johnston, Gillian S. Oak (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016).

⁶ Other accounts of the early years and first half of the OEF-P campaign include David P. Fridovich and Fred Krawchuk, "Winning in the Pacific: Special Operations Forces and the Indirect Approach," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 44, 1ˢᵗ Quarter 2007, pp. 24-27; COL Gregory Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operations: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach," *Military Review*, Vol. 86, No. 6, November-December 2006, pp. 2-12; and COL (ret.) David S. Maxwell, "Foreign Internal Defense: An Indirect Approach to Counterinsurgency/Counterterrorism, Lessons from Operation Enduring Freedom- Philippines for dealing with Non-Existential Threats to the United States," unpublished paper presented at Foreign Policy Research Institute conference, December 6, 2011.

⁷ According to the DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (JP 1-02), foreign internal defense is "(DOD) Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security. Also called FID. Source: JP 3-22."

⁸ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Mission to the Philippines, Country Assistance Strategy, 2009-2013, pp. 5, 15.

⁹ Interview with former JSOTF-P commander, August 14, 2013.

¹⁰ The statistical analysis was conducted by Patrick B. Johnston for the previously cited RAND publication. Statistics were provided by the Empirical Studies of Conflict database, courtesy of Joseph Felter, co-director of the ESOC project at Princeton, who has conducted both operations and research in the Philippines for many years.

¹¹ These estimates cited are from the Philippine armed forces. Other statistics vary but are roughly comparable. For example, "Country Reports on Terror- ism 2013" (U.S. Department of State, 2014) estimated the number of ASG members at 400. The department's 2000 report, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, estimated the number of ASG members at "more than 2,000" (U.S. Department of State, 2001).

¹² Joseph Felter, "Taking Guns to a Knife Fight," in Joseph H. Felter, *Taking Guns to a Knife Fight:*

Effective Military Support to COIN, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, thesis, April 1, 2009. As of September 5, 2015: <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA510853>. An expanded version PhD dissertation employing a microdata set of 12,000 incidents between 2001 and 2012. His findings indicate that the quality of such elite forces is not fully determined by factors such as state wealth or level of development, which in turn carries important policy implications for the professional training of militaries in reducing the damage from, and possible prospects for, protracted insurgencies and civil wars.

¹³ Drawing by author.

Photos

Page 150. Image by Keith Bacongo. Into the marsh… From <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kitoy/2704303280>. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License < https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>. Photo unaltered.

Book Reviews

Blood Year: The Unraveling of Western Counterterrorism

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REVIEWED BY JAMES DOBBINS

This is a somber and angry book. As previewed in his subtitle, David Kilcullen argues that, in all but one significant respect, 15 years of Western counterterrorism efforts have failed. He acknowledges that further attacks on the scale of September 11, 2001, have been prevented, both by enhancing domestic security measures and diminishing the capacity of al-Qaeda (AQ) and other groups to organize complex, expensive, and distant operations. "The disaggregated, atomized terrorist cells and radicalized individuals of today can mount a larger number of smaller, less sophisticated and far less damaging attacks than the centrally organized AQ of 2001," he writes. "If that were the only outcome [of Western policies], you would have to call the past fifteen years a resounding success."

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But such a conclusion, Kilcullen insists, ignores the immense damage being done in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Nigeria, Mali, Somalia, Kenya, and Pakistan by al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and affiliated groups that Western policy has allowed to proliferate. He thus maintains that the "Blood Year," starting with the fall of Mosul in June 2014, represents "nothing less than the collapse of the Western counterterrorism strategy as we've known it since 2001."

Kilcullen acknowledges that disengaging from the Middle East by focusing on domestic security would be cheaper and perhaps adequately effective in limiting attacks on the American and European homelands. He argues against such a response, however, for two reasons. First, Western publics would find themselves living in police states, forced to accept ever more restrictions on freedom and intrusions on privacy. Second, withdrawal from the Middle East would collapse the broader international system that depends on American leadership and upon which the security and prosperity of the United States in turn depends.

David Kilcullen has advised on and participated in Western counterterrorism (CT) efforts nearly continuously since 2003, first as an Australian army officer and then as an American government official and a prolific author. His latest work offers a critical review of Western—primarily American—CT policy since 9/11, as well as a detailed account of the rise of ISIL. It concludes with his recommendations for American strategy going forward.

In his preface, Kilcullen insists that this is neither a book about ISIL nor a comprehensive history of the post-9/11 war on terrorism, but rather "a personal account by a mid-level

player." These denials should not be taken too seriously. There is enough first-person reminiscence in the book to substantiate Kilcullen's abundant credentials to recount, analyze, and recommend as he does, but these personal vignettes take up little space and rather serve as introductions to narrative accounts, with commentary, on the evolution of terrorist movements in the Muslim world since September 11, 2001, and the course of Western efforts to combat them.

The "Blood Year" of the title opens with the fall of Mosul and extends into, and as a practical matter through, 2015, concluding with the November 13 ISIL-inspired attacks in Paris. In the preface, Kilcullen notes that his academic field is not terrorism, but rather guerrilla and unconventional warfare. He thus devotes the bulk of his attention to the insurgent and even to the conventional military threat posed by ISIL and the Western military responses. He also, however, covers quite effectively the evolution in terrorist attacks and counterterrorist operations in Western homelands.

The book contains excellent detailed descriptions of several set-piece battles that marked this year, including the ISIL seizures of Mosul and Ramadi, its loss of Tikrit, and the seesaw battle of Kunduz between the Taliban and Afghan government forces. These accounts make clear how formidable these movements have become and how distinct the challenge they represent is from the underground network of conspiratorial cells that characterized the al-Qaeda of old.

The book's coverage is neither comprehensive nor entirely consistent. It is mostly about the decline of al-Qaeda and the rise of ISIL, with a focus on Iraq and Syria, but also addresses Tunisia and Libya. There is also extensive discussion of Afghanistan, mostly as regards the Taliban, although al-Qaeda and ISIL both make cameo appearances there. On the other hand, al-Shabaab in Somalia, an al-Qaeda affiliate, gets only passing mention, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, an ISIL franchise, gets none at all. This selection reflects Kilcullen's extensive field experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in and around Syria. The book is stronger for concentrating on the areas the author knows best, rather than straining for universal coverage.

Kilcullen is highly critical of the policies of both the Bush and the Obama administrations. Beginning in 2003, while still in Australia, he favored a strategy he labels "disaggregation." This involves decapitating the al-Qaeda leadership, cutting the links among its affiliates and imitators, and then addressing each of these within its own unique context. The Bush administration's so-called "Global War on Terror" also attacked al-Qaeda's central nervous system, but it tended to take an undifferentiated approach to the wider range of violent extremist movements in the Muslim world.

Kilcullen likens Bush's invasion of Iraq to Hitler's assault on the Soviet Union, arguing that in both cases the result was to open an unnecessary second front, diverting attention and resources from what should have been the main fight. He also criticizes the administration's initial small-footprint approach to post-conflict stabilization in both Iraq and Afghanistan, which gave space to the emergence of violent resistance movements.

The Obama administration receives equal criticism from Kilcullen for withdrawing American forces from Iraq and for seeking to do the same in Afghanistan. He contrasts Obama's vacillation over Syria with Russian

President Vladimir Putin's decisive action there. While these are familiar criticisms, Kilcullen provides enough detail to lend them additional weight. His analysis of Russian policy is by turns admiring and condemnatory. He posits three options for American policy in responding to Russia's expanded role in Syria: leave the problem to them; compete with Moscow for influence; or cooperate. Kilcullen recommends the third option, a view which the Obama administration seems to have adopted as well.

He advocates a middle path between the advise, assist, and aerial bombardment strategy of the Obama administration and the overrun, occupy, and govern approach adopted by the Bush administration in Iraq. Specifically, he recommends a reduced reliance on drone strikes, which Kilcullen has long warned may create more terrorists than they kill, combined with the commitment of "a moderately larger number of ground troops" in a campaign to drive ISIL out of its territorial base in Iraq and Syria. He also argues for greater Western pressure on its Middle Eastern partners for reform and democratization.

Though Kilcullen opposes an open-ended commitment to occupation and reconstruction, he does not offer a view as to how the areas liberated from ISIL would be governed. He recognizes that taking Mosul and Raqqa will not end the threat from ISIL—or an even worse successor—unless this territory can be held. One can imagine some equilibrium being achieved between Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds in Iraq within the framework of the existing Iraqi constitution, but it is hard to believe that peace can be consolidated in Syria without some sort of stabilization force.

Kilcullen labels his preferred strategy "active containment." This seems something of a misnomer, as he clearly advocates a military campaign to close down the ISIL caliphate in Syria and Iraq. However, he also envisages "a multigenerational struggle against an implacable enemy," warning that the level of violence we are seeing in the Middle East is "the new normal," not some transitory aberration. Kilcullen can certainly not be charged with undue optimism. His diagnosis is dire, but his prescriptions are comparatively restrained and might well appeal to the next U.S. administration.

Team of Teams: New Rules Of Engagement for a Complex World

By Stanley A. McChrystal, Tantum Collins, David Silverman, and Chris Fussell
Portfolio
290 pp.
ISBN-13: 9781591847489

REVIEWED BY CHRISTOPHER J. LAMB

General Stanley McChrystal (Ret.) and his team have written what is arguably the most important book on national security in the past decade, but it is not likely to be recognized as such in Washington, D.C. Before explaining the book's import and why many in the nation's capital

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will underestimate its significance, we first need a summary of the book and its contents.

The book, *Team of Teams: New Rules Of Engagement for A Complex World*, is a great read and like McChrystal's previous best seller, *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*, takes readers on an interesting journey. In My Share of the Task, McChrystal catalogued his time as a former Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, and then later, as Commander of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan. In it McChrystal shares his experience and reasoning as he struggles to understand not only the strengths and weaknesses of our adversaries but also those of our own war machine and national security decisionmaking process. One of the many things that make that book compelling is McChrystal's candor about his learning process, which he explains in detail. In short and simple terms, what General McChrystal and his forces did was revolutionize counterterrorism operations with unprecedented levels of cross-organizational—including interagency—collaboration that permitted a real-time fusing of intelligence and operations.

Team of Teams is a similar journey of discovery, but one that puts McChrystal's extensive military experience in a much broader context. McChrystal says he and his team wanted to know whether the organizational transformation they forged by trial and error in the heat of battle to defeat elusive enemies using age-old unconventional tactics and 21st century technology "was a one-off occurrence that emerged from the unique factors of post-2003 Iraq, or whether it was a microcosm of a broader changed environment that impacts almost every organization in today's world." The authors conclude the latter and wrote the book to explain why.

The book is highly readable; erudite without being impenetrable, and full of illustrative examples. The overall structure of the book is logical. It begins by arguing the environment has changed due to social and technological factors; then explains the significance of these changes for organizations and the resultant changes required for successful performance in such an environment; and concludes with leadership lessons for how to make transformed organizations function well. Chapters typically begin with military examples that illustrate a concept, then broaden to include interesting and often fascinating examples from other fields of endeavor and organizational experiences. Each chapter ends with a "recap" shadow box that offers a set of bullets reviewing main points.

Most of the military examples in Team of Teams relate how the U.S. Special Operations Command had to dramatically change its organization and culture to achieve the agility necessary to keep pace with the terrorists and insurgent networks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries. Although Team of Teams is sprinkled with examples from military operations, anyone hoping for a historical account of the U.S. military's fight against terrorists and insurgents should read My Share of the Task. Indeed, reading My Share of the Task before Team of Teams will help readers who want to more fully appreciate the difficulty of the task General McChrystal took on and the tremendous impact he had before his career ended in Afghanistan for what this reviewer believes were poorly thought through political reasons.

McChrystal was able to retain the traditional strengths of the U.S. Special Operations Command, which include vast resources and superbly trained and equipped forces, while augmenting those capabilities with assets from

across the national security architecture. Special operations forces essentially opened up their small teams to personnel from across the Department of Defense and numerous other departments and agencies, mostly but not exclusively from the diverse intelligence community. In the process he essentially created cross-organizational teams at multiple levels of the national security enterprise. Then he delegated authority to those teams, empowering them to take initiative and move fast enough to outpace the enemy networks of informers and operations.

Reading a bit between the lines, it is evident that McChrystal broke a lot of rules, formal and informal along the way. Most of those rules were informal. For example, he deployed some of his best operators to serve as "liaison officers" to other organizations. He did so to build trust and ensure a common sense of purpose. Most commanders would never think of devoting such scarce talent to facilitate collaboration. McChrystal acknowledged the costs of so many liaisons but said it was necessary in order to develop the "shared consciousness" he believed was essential to success. He wanted to develop a national security force that was a network animated by a shared consciousness and purpose. This goal required teamwork at an unprecedented level, a network of small cross-functional teams sharing data, insights, and values but empowered to make immediate decisions in pursuit of the mission as they thought their immediate circumstances warranted. Hence the title: "team of teams."

McChrystal's approach was effective, and convinced him that the concepts pioneered in the U.S. Special Operations Command are applicable to many of the challenging problems government and businesses confront today. In a complex, rapidly changing environment it is essential to break down barriers to integration and collaboration, especially in organizations that are divided into functional silos (e.g., separate divisions for research, engineering, manufacturing, marketing, finance, personnel, etc.). It is also necessary to push decision making down to lower levels where the teams can keep pace with the fast-evolving problems they confront. Some organizations are already using these principles to good effect, as McChrystal and his co-authors illustrate throughout the book.

One of the major take-aways from Team of Teams is that organizational change of this nature will be resisted by many people whose only experience is in large, hierarchical organizations divided into functional fiefdoms. Thus McChrystal's "team-of-teams" approach also requires leadership change—starting at the top. First, the senior leader must take the mission on as a personal matter, and think of his or her job as more akin to gardener than chess master. McChrystal says "constantly pruning and shaping our network" was necessary, and the role of the leader was to ensure "the delicate balance of information and empowerment that sustained our operations" did not atrophy. This task could not be delegated: "I found that only the senior leader could drive the operating rhythm, transparency, and cross-functional cooperation we needed." On the other hand, the lower echelons had to be empowered to take initiative. This means "middle managers" had to adopt different leadership styles; less hierarchical and more collaborative, and if they will not change, then they must be replaced.

McChrystal, called "one of America's greatest warriors" by former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, is widely admired for

his leadership. Wired Magazine, for example, notes that "to hear McChrystal talk about leadership is like hearing Steve Jobs talk about innovation or Henry Ford talk about productivity." Team of Teams has earned equally glowing plaudits from almost all reviewers. Even more startling, there are news reports that the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency are currently undergoing organizational reforms based on the model McChrystal pioneered. Indeed, as this review is being written, the Senate has draft legislation in place that would mandate McChrystal-like changes to the Department of Defense.

Hopefully all these efforts will be pursued to successful conclusion and bear fruit, but there is reason to doubt it. Washington is singularly focused on personalities and secondarily, policies. The hard, no-nonsense work of actually making government organizations perform well is not given a high priority. In fact, many seem to have given up on the idea that government can perform well and should be held accountable for doing so. And even when the right leaders arise, their tenures are often cut short by politics before they can effect permanent, productive change. Thus, unfortunately, there is reason to doubt *Team of Teams* will have the impact it should. That does not detract, however, from the powerful message of McChrystal and his co-authors, which is well-worth reading.

REVIEWED BY LAWRENCE GARBER

The July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey reminded us how difficult it is to predict the occurrence of such events or their likely outcomes. For several hours, many observers feared that Turkey's history of periodic coups leading to military government was being replayed. But through a combination of inept coup planning and quickly mobilized popular support for the democratically elected government, the coup failed. The massive crackdown that has followed highlights the profound political implications of this type of episode for Turkey and for the broader international community. And within the policy and intelligence communities of Turkey's allies and adversaries, reviews are undoubtedly underway to determine whether signs of unrest within the military and of the popular support of the Erdogan government were missed or properly anticipated.

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I started writing this review of Zoltan Barany's *How Armies Respond to Revolutions and Why* with events in Turkey as a backdrop. As Barany states unabashedly, he seeks to provide the policymaker and the analyst with a predictive tool regarding the likely actions of a military faced with a popular rebellion. Would Barany's tool have helped Turkey watchers in the period preceding the aborted coup, or is the tool relevant only in the specific circumstances of a military response to a popular rebellion? And where does Barany's tool fit from the perspective of the human rights activist and democracy promoter confronting an abusive military?

Barany makes two core arguments: first, "the response of the regime's regular armed forces to an uprising is critical to the success or failure of that uprising;" and second, "we can make a highly educated guess about—and in some cases even confidently predict—the army's response to a revolution or popular uprising if we have in-depth knowledge about a particular army, its relationship to state and society, and the external environment." My reaction to these arguments was excitement regarding the contribution such a predictive tool could make to national security, coupled with broad skepticism about the accuracy of such a tool in the real-world, quick-decision circumstances that challenge most policymakers; immediately, I searched my memory for examples that suggest the opposite of what Barany claims is so predictable. Barany, however, calms concerns about over-generalization by including the requisite qualifiers regarding the importance of understanding underlying context, and by presenting his arguments in a logical and readable manner.

Methodologically, Barany eschews creating an extensive database coding multiple factors, which would be time consuming and require extensive subjective judgments about diverse historical events. Instead he relies on a "process-tracing method to identify causal mechanisms." He draws on a series of contemporary case studies, which include Iran (1979), Burma (1988), the 1989 uprisings in China and the Warsaw Pact countries, and the 2011-2012 Arab Spring. In each case, he analyzes what contributed to the military's decision to intervene on the side of the rebels or to support the regime, or its inability to present a united front. With appropriate caveats as to the importance of context, he concludes that the following six variables are the most important (in descending order of significance): (1) the military's internal cohesion; (2) whether the army is comprised of volunteers or conscripts; (3) the regime's treatment of and directions to the military; (4) the generals' view of the regime's legitimacy; (5) the size, composition, and nature of the protests; and (6) the potential for foreign intervention. None of these six variables is particularly surprising, although they are all subject to the competing subjective assessments of the analyst.

But even accepting the premise that the variables can be accurately assessed, how useful, as a practical matter, are they to the policymaker confronting an emerging crisis? In the framework presented by Barany, the variables are limited to the circumstances of a popular uprising emerging over a period of time sufficient to provide the military an opportunity to consider various courses of action. The variables do not tell us *when* a popular uprising is likely to occur, but only the probable response of the military. Nor do the variables inform when the military as an institution or one of its components is likely to foment a coup or to provoke a popular uprising; these

circumstances are as likely to confront the policymaker as is the popular uprising scenario. The variables also do not explicitly address how the population is likely to respond to a military-initiated action, although they do provide important insights. Thus, the questions that Barany is asking and answering should contribute to our understanding of the situations today in Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Iran, North Korea, Syria, and Egypt, but do not answer the most urgent questions that a policymaker needs answers to: is a popular uprising or a military rebellion imminent? And, given our geopolitical or humanitarian concerns, is there anything that we can do to stimulate a successful, and hopefully peaceful, popular uprising or military rebellion?

Barany does not address the mobilizing strategy of those promoting an uprising and their interface with the military, but approvingly references Erica Chenoweth's and Maria Stephan's 2011 book, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, which focuses on collective action and military reaction. Interestingly, Chenoweth and Stephan use the Iranian and Burma uprisings as case studies, and add the first Palestinian intifada and the 1986 Philippines People Power Movement. While the Palestinian case is anomalous for Barany's purposes, I was surprised that there was not a single reference in Barany's book to the Philippines example, whose lessons have been widely shared in both military and civilian circles.

To recap briefly, Ferdinand Marcos, who had twice been elected President of the Philippines, declared martial law in 1972. In November 1985, under considerable pressure from the United States and others in the international community, he scheduled a snap election for February 1986. A long-divided

opposition coalesced and designated Corazon Aquino as their candidate, ultimately generating widespread popular support throughout the country under difficult and often dangerous campaigning conditions. In parallel, various citizen groups, which had organized several years earlier and were supported by an activist Catholic Church, mobilized under the banner of free and fair elections. When "official" results were announced that proclaimed Marcos the winner, the opposition mobilized mass rallies to denounce the process and to declare Aquino the "people's" victor. Aquino's claims were supported by the findings of domestic monitors and international observers, whose respective contemporary contributions to the cause of free and fair elections are often traced to the 1986 events in the Philippines.

Two weeks after the election, Minister of Defense Enrile and Deputy Army Chief of Staff Ramos mutinied against Marcos, proclaiming that they could no longer support his illegitimate regime. They were supported by a group of senior officers operating as part of the Reformed Armed Forces Movement (RAM), which sought to use an existing network of identified reformers to back the mutineers. When Marcos and the Army Chief of Staff threatened to destroy the rebellion by force, millions of Filipinos took to the streets and surrounded the two camps in Manila where Enrile and Ramos had launched their mutiny to protect them against an expected attack by forces loyal to Marcos. After a four-day standoff, Marcos agreed to leave the Philippines for exile in the United States and Aquino was installed as president. The Philippines People Power revolution quickly became a model for democracy activists around the world to study and to emulate.

The Philippines case complements several insights included in Barany's book. As Barany's initial arguments suggest, despite the mass mobilization of Philippine People Power activists, it was not until the military shifted allegiance that the popular uprising was secured. More relevant, Barany's variables suggest that the military rebellion should have been predictable, or at least not come as a major surprise: the military was not internally cohesive and was poorly treated by Marcos as an institution, and the soldiers were conscripts who were not likely to take action against large numbers of peaceful protesters, who were often led by recognizable religious figures.

The Philippines story, of course, did not end in 1986. In the ensuing years, there were several coup attempts, often led by RAM officers who were frustrated that the reforms they had advocated were not being implemented. A question for Barany is whether these coups or their outcomes could have been predicted using his variables, or whether there is an inevitable lag time following a cataclysmic event, such as occurred in the Philippines, that makes difficult the in-depth analysis required to use the variables as a predictive tool.

The Philippines example also highlights the important role that elections often play in mobilizing a population and the multiple roles played by the military in such circumstances. In the lead-up to an election, the military must decide whether to play a neutral role or to seek to affect the political outcome. The tools available to the military range from active intimidation of the population to genuine efforts to maintain the peace, to encouragement of military officers to support a particular candidate, to vote their conscience using a secret ballot, to facilitate massive fraud, or to protect the integrity of the process. Obviously,

the military is not a monolith regarding these issues, and democracy activists wisely pay attention to the military's pre-election, election day, and post-election rhetoric and actions. While the variables that Barany identifies as predictive of the military's response to a popular uprising may inform our understanding of the military's role in an election, they often trend in multiple directions and make definitive predictions difficult.

Despite its limitations, Barany's book deserves serious attention. The tools presented provides a constructive frame for the analyst and suggests avenues for further research. In a distinct political crisis, even beyond the popular revolt/military response sequence, the tool will contribute to more informed decisions based on an accurate appreciation of the likely role that the military will play. However, we still yearn for the tool that can predict with high accuracy when a popular uprising or a military coup is likely to happen, so as not to be surprised by the seemingly random occurrence of, for example, a coup attempt and popular response in Turkey or the lack of coups and popular uprisings in countries with aging or inept authoritarian leaders, or with populations that have been victimized by brutal and corrupt leaders for extended periods of time. And so, we must continue to plan for multiple scenarios and not convince ourselves that we can rely on our ability to predict the future. **PRISM**

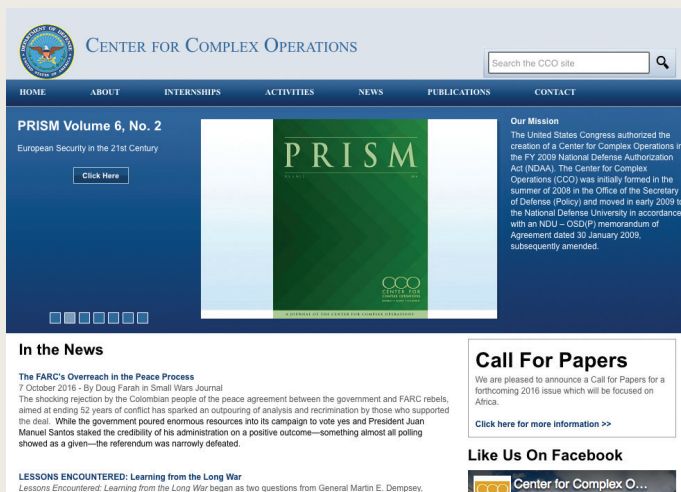# The People's Liberation Army and Contingency Planning in China

How will China use its increasing military capabilities in the future? China faces a complicated security environment with a wide range of internal and external threats. Rapidly expanding international interests are creating demands for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to conduct new missions ranging from protecting Chinese shipping from Somali pirates to evacuating citizens from Libya. The most recent Chinese defense white paper states that the armed forces must "make serious preparations to cope with the most complex and difficult scenarios . . . so as to ensure proper responses . . . at any time and under any circumstances."

Based on a conference co-sponsored by Taiwan's Council of Advanced Policy Studies, RAND, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and National Defense University, The People's Liberation Army and Contingency Planning in China brings together leading experts from the United States and Taiwan to examine how the PLA prepares for a range of domestic, border, and maritime contingencies.

Book available from NDU Press at: http://ndupress.ndu.edu

An Interview with

General (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal

What did we get right and what did we get wrong in Afghanistan and Iraq?

McChrystal: In both cases we didn't understand either the problem or our objectives going in. In Afghanistan in 2001 we went in on obviously very short notice in response to the attacks on September 11th. There was a rich history in Afghanistan—in which the United States had been deeply involved—and yet we didn't really go to school on that. Not only did we not understand the culture of Afghanistan, but we did not really understand the players in Afghanistan—the former warlords, the leaders that had fought against the Soviets—who had become such important players once the Taliban regime was defeated. Although we understood in very broad strokes the Pakistani and Iranian positions, we didn't understand the nuances; we didn't understand the long-existing issues and concerns that they have. So as we started to execute a policy that on a superficial level seemed very logical, we ran into pressures, forces, interests, and equities of people that are, I won't say immovable, but very difficult to move. The entire western world was very surprised by that or at least unprepared to deal with it. Afghanistan in particular was a case of finding a problem of much greater complexity, much deeper roots, and much more difficult issues than we appreciated.

Iraq was different; we had time to think about it. Iraq was a war of choice versus a war of reaction. And yet, interestingly enough, we didn't understand the problem there either. Most leaders knew about the Kurds, Sunni, and Shia. But once we got inside we found that the dynamics were actually far more complex. The idea of removing the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein and replacing it with a government of our making, and the functions of state just continuing on was based on a fundamentally flawed assumption. We also made the flawed assumption that we would be welcomed as liberators. In one sense we were. And we were initially welcomed as liberators by people who were not happy with Saddam Hussein, but we were not welcomed as occupiers. Once we came to be perceived as occupiers and not liberators all of the political and

economic frustrations came to the forefront and were pasted on us. We just were not prepared for that.

What lessons should we have learned from Afghanistan and Iraq?

McChrystal: In the case of Afghanistan, immediately after 9/11, in terms of military action we should have done nothing initially. I now believe we should have taken the first year after 9/11 and sent 10,000 young Americans—military, civilians, diplomats—to language school; Pashtu, Dari, Arabic. We should have started to build up the capacity we didn't have. I would have spent that year with diplomats traveling the world as the aggrieved party. We had just been struck by al-Qaeda. I would have made our case around the world that this is a global problem and that the whole world has to deal with it. I would have spent the full year in preparation. I would not have been worried about striking al-Qaeda that year; they weren't going anywhere. We could have organized, we could have built the right coalitions, we could have done things with a much greater level of understanding than we did in our spasmodic response. Politically, doing what I described would have been very difficult. But I believe that kind of preparation was needed.

With Iraq, even though we had from 1990 on to prepare, we didn't really dissect that problem in the way we should have either. Once the decision was made to invade we focused far too much on the invasion and dealing with fortress Baghdad. Phase 4, and even beyond Phase 4, the permanent situation in the Middle East with a different regime in Iraq should have been something we spent a lot of time thinking about. The military part was the easy part. There was no doubt we could do the military part. What there was a doubt about was, once you remove one of the key players in a region—and one could argue that Saddam Hussein was such a key player—you change the dynamic in the whole region. We were not ready for that. We really needed to be thinking about that and building a diplomatic coalition. We ended up getting a different Iran than we might have wanted and we certainly have a different Syria than we wanted. Of course you can't say Syria would not have happened without the invasion of Iraq, but we certainly should have thought through the unanticipated consequences of our actions and been better prepared for the things that happened.

What would you have done differently in Syria?

McChrystal: It's easy to criticize American foreign policy in Syria. It has been very difficult. In retrospect it's clear that one of the things we are paying a high price for is reduced American credibility in the region. After 9/11 initially we responded very forcefully both militarily and diplomatically. But then we showed the region just how long the dog's leash was. Once they saw not only all that we could do but also all we could not, or would not do, they saw the limits of American power and the limits of American patience. Suddenly our ability to influence the region declined. And as we started to show political fatigue and frustration, people in the region started to make new calculations. If you look at the behavior of the various countries—some former allies, the Saudis for instance—they have recalibrated their relationship with us and their role in the region, because they perceive

that going forward the United States will have a different role than in the past. That has weighed very heavily in Syria. We have signaled very precisely all the things we will not do. Once you signal all the things you will not do, your opponent has the luxury of saying, "I know where my safe zone is." That was probably a mistake. There needs to be some ambiguity about what we will and won't do so that our foes are in doubt, and don't know where we'll stop.

Would you then argue against "red lines?"

McChrystal: Red lines are dangerous things. Anytime you draw a red line you invite your adversary to call your bluff. If they do cross it you have to be prepared to act. If you don't act, you pay a big price in credibility with not just your foes but with your allies as well.

Red lines tell them exactly just how far that they can go without fear of retaliation.

McChrystal: Like with Dean Acheson's Perimeter Speech when the Secretary of State left South Korea outside of the U.S. protection perimeter. Everybody points to that, and whether or not that was the cause of the Korean War, it points out the danger in red lines.

What can we do today to defeat ISIL or the Islamic State?

McChrystal: The Islamic State is the symptom, not the cause. Some argue that if the Islamic State were eliminated the problem would be solved. I would counter-argue that if the Islamic State suddenly vanished, most of

the problems in the region would still be there and they would be just as intractable as they are now. The Islamic State is a reaction to the chaos and the weakness of the existing regimes in the region, the lack of legitimacy, not just of the Bashar al-Assad government, but in Iraq and elsewhere. The weakness of these regimes is the absence of a compelling narrative that signals to the people that there will be political, economic, and social opportunities in the future. ISIL is a rejection of the status quo. That is also what the Arab Spring was about. It wasn't a move to democracy, it was a rejection of the status quo. The great tragedy of the Arab Spring was that there was no compelling narrative around which the people could coalesce. There was no pan-Arab nationalism as there was in the past, nor any other compelling narrative. The only counters to the ISIL jihad narrative have been the narratives of status quo organizations and governments that, in the minds of populations, are, at best, 20th century entities. People don't want to maintain that; even though they might not want ISIL they haven't seen another option yet. ISIL must be contained for the moment and ultimately destroyed over time, but most importantly the region needs a narrative that is compelling and credible to the populations. That narrative must include a vision of what the region will look like in 25 years. Of course the vision won't get everything right because things change. But there seems to be a sense in the region today that leaders don't know where things are going. So many of the stabilizing factors have changed. Those autocratic regimes may not have been good but they were stable, as was the presence of the United States since we were so tied to the flow of oil. Today a mother in Ohio is not going to be nearly as willing to send her daughter or son to protect

the lanes of oil delivery in the Middle East as she might have been in 1978 because we frankly don't need Middle East oil today. That's not lost on people in the region. They believe they need some new kind of believable and credible defense and security structure that looks durable.

What can the United States do to support that new kind of credible and durable security structure?

McChrystal: We cannot retreat from the region. We cannot say, "We're done. We didn't enjoy Iraq or Afghanistan so we're going home." I don't think that is our intent, but there is a difference between the message you transmit and the message that is received. We transmitted a very nuanced message that was received in a very stark and un-nuanced way; that the United States is leaving. That the United States wanted a nuclear deal with Iran and now that they have it, Iran can do what it wants. That the United States is not going to help contain Iran. We have sent an unintentional message that what happens in Syria and Iraq is their problem. It's natural for us to feel that way. And if the region thinks that we are disengaging they will assume the Europeans are disengaging as well, because most of the Europeans don't have the capacity to remain without American support. There is an assumption that the United States is not going to be a significant player in the region. When they see Russia come into Syria that seems like confirmation. In 1973 Henry Kissinger artfully maneuvered the Soviets out of the region. The region has been relatively stable since then. Now the Russians are back and the Americans seem to be on the way out, and unwilling to play a major role. Everybody is trying to figure

out what the future is going to look like. In every country in the region the people are trying to recalculate. I watch what Jordan is doing; I watch Saudi Arabia and Yemen. They are all trying to figure out how to deal in this new environment.

Should the United States step up its presence and be more proactive in the region?

McChrystal: Yes, but that doesn't necessarily mean a larger military presence. It means a guaranteed level of participation and a willingness, when necessary, to apply strong economic and military pressure to show that we are a player in the region; that we are a permanent fact of life here. To most people that is a desirable thing. They will always complain about us. But like America in Europe after World War II we were a very stabilizing factor.

What do you see as the starkest, most challenging characteristics of the emerging global threat environment?

McChrystal: There are two characteristics of concern. First is the reemergence of great power nationalism; the rise of China, the reemergence of Russia, both with enough power and self-confidence to go back to traditional nationalist objectives. Russia is trying to move back into areas in Ukraine and perhaps even into the Baltic States, to try to reassert itself. That is a natural ebb and flow of power going back hundreds of years. I don't think we saw the end of history in 1989; rather we are back on the track of history. Russia and China are major factors, and they are enough that we might not be in a post-modern period of history. A European war is not unthinkable. People who want to believe a war in Europe is

not possible might be in for a surprise. We have to acknowledge great power politics; we can't pretend they are gone.

The second area of concern is that technology and globalization have been great equalizers. Modern technology has given individuals extraordinary power. An individual with an automatic weapon can be extraordinarily lethal. An individual with a weapon of mass destruction, or a small number of drones or precision weapons can be extraordinarily lethal. Everyone now has precision strike capability; you can buy a cheap drone and put a hand grenade on it and you've got precision strike. It's really difficult to defend against that. Suddenly the security situation has changed; anyone with a keyboard is a cyber warrior. The problem with the rise in power of these individuals—which really didn't exist in the past—is that individuals in very small groups have a disproportionate ability to act. But they don't have the vulnerabilities of a nation state. Nuclear power and nuclear strategy were always based on holding each other at risk. The problem is you can't hold an individual or terrorist group at risk because you might not be able to find them—or they may not care. As a consequence, deterrence in its traditional sense doesn't work. How can you prevent people from doing harmful things if you can't deter them? In law enforcement it's the risk of being caught and put in prison. A terrorist group might not care about being caught, or being imprisoned. They may not even care about dying. The only deterrents available are either massive protection—enormous amounts of security—or some way to identify and either persuade them or physically prevent them from acting.

We have never faced this challenge before. Technology has created the problem because

it empowers individuals to do unprecedentedly destructive things. On the other hand technology empowers society to track and monitor people as never before. We are beginning an era in which our ability to leverage technology to track people and control populations is going to create a lot of tension; I think we are going to see a lot more population control measures. We are going to have to give up a lot more of our precious civil rights than most of us imagine because we want security. In other countries that haven't had the freedom that we have, they may not notice as much, but we are entering a period where we will have to make those choices. And the choices are likely to go in the way of surrendering civil rights for security.

On a different subject, how would you characterize the distinctive qualities of special operations forces? What makes them special?

McChrystal: It is important to be clear that special operations forces are not better operations forces, they are special operations forces. That is one of the great misunderstandings of special operations forces, and special operators have been guilty of that as well. They were originally formed to do specific things; the Rangers were formed to do raiding. The size of a Ranger company in World War II was based on the capacity of landing craft because they were going to conduct raids into coastal areas. The Green Berets were originally designed to work behind enemy lines and they were formed in twelve person teams with specific capability to build up guerrilla forces against an existing government. We have entered an era where what we've done through selection and a lot of other factors has turned today's special forces into supermen and superwomen.

The distinguishing characteristic of special operating forces is that they are more elite, better trained, uniquely equipped; and they are all of these things.

The danger is when we begin to believe that because they are better trained or equipped, we should use them for any task we think is important. Eventually we want to turn to them for any tasking; because why shouldn't we just use the better force? Special operations forces are indeed truly exceptional; but as we begin using them for more and more things, we will eventually destroy them by deploying them for the wrong tasks. And we will have misplaced confidence in their ability to do everything and anything.

What does this mean for special operations forces? Conventional forces are developing a lot of the same capabilities as those previously associated with special operations forces. Special operations forces need much greater knowledge of the environments in which they will fight. Back when they were formed, during World War II, the Jedburghs were going into Europe, so they were prepped for that. The special forces that were formed under President John F. Kennedy were regionally focused; they were taught foreign languages, and the idea was that they would know the people, they would know the culture, and they would be able to operate effectively because of that knowledge. But then we started deploying those groups all over the world and they lost their unique specialized knowledge and skills. They still had a unique organization but there were lots of things they could not do in an area that people who really had long service, long experience in that culture could do. We are going to have to get back to that. We are going to have to make language training and cultural training in special operations forces an absolute requirement and language training in regular forces a norm. Many like to identify the special operator with kicking down doors and martial arts with advanced weapons. Those skills have actually been commoditized. We can train anybody to do those things. In Iraq particularly we found that was the easiest part of what we did. Not to say that it was easy, but it was by far the easiest. The hardest part was knitting together the intelligence and the various organizations needed to form a team that could pull it all together. That was much harder. We have a fascination with big-shouldered, big-knuckled commandos which threatens to force all special operations forces into a niche that does not include all the other things they have to do.

Can you explain the distinction special operators make between the direct approach and the indirect approach? And what is the importance of the indirect approach?

McChrystal: The direct approach is a raid on a target. The capacity you need has to be pretty good; like a bullet shot out of a gun. The real value though is in the gun and in the person aiming it. When you aim, when you pull the trigger, that's the important part.

The indirect approach on the other hand is when you are essentially leveraging things, for example leveraging the feelings of the local population. You are trying to leverage the capacity, or increase the capacity, of local defense forces. Or if you're in a guerrilla insurgency mode, you are trying to support an insurgency and leverage that. The indirect approach allows you to get much more scale than you can get with the direct approach alone. A few people if trained properly can have massive effect. More importantly if you

use the indirect approach effectively, the local population you are training is owning and solving its own problems. This is hard to do, but if you don't do it, the moment you're out of there, there is a huge gap in capacity.

There have been times when the indirect approach has worked extraordinarily well. The fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan leveraged the natural resentment of the Afghans toward the Soviet occupiers. We leveraged that frustration to create opposition movements. We enabled them with arms and money. And they defeated the Soviet Union and drove them out. On the surface it looks as though for a relatively small investment, and no Americans killed, we beat the Soviet Union. We gave the Soviets their Vietnam. In so doing though, we changed Afghanistan. We created these warlord groups that fought a civil war that then allowed the rise of the Taliban. We created problems that we are now facing. Maybe they were foreseeable, but we certainly didn't foresee them. Regardless, this was a classic case of using leverage, and shows how the indirect approach is not only more efficient, ultimately, but more durable, if you get it right.

Do special operations forces have a comparative advantage with respect to the indirect approach?

McChrystal: They should, because special operations forces typically are older, more mature, have longer service, and more experience. If they've received language training, and if they have had multiple tours in a country, they can be really effective. If they have not had these, it makes things much harder.

Two decades ago John Arquilla wrote "it takes a network to defeat a network." If our adversary is a network, how do we become a network to defeat them?

McChrystal: My interpretation of "it takes a network to defeat a network" is that we have to connect all the different parts of our government and our capacities in order to do a number of important things. First we have to gather information, so that if somebody steps on the foot the head knows it, the whole body knows it. We also have to be able to pass capacity; when we get information, we can't just rely on the capacity at that point; the entire capacity of the network must be able to apply resources of every type—diplomatic, military, and economic—against the problem as and where it arises. We have to learn more quickly because if each individual or each part of the network learns every one of the bitter lessons of fighting an insurgency or terrorism, it's just too slow. We can't afford to keep relearning the same lessons. The whole organization has to learn. You might think that we do learn, but as organizations—and even individual organizations are often siloed internally—it's hard to do that. When organizations are separate, and not really networked, it is almost impossible. All the information we needed to prevent the 9/11 attack existed within the U.S. government. We just couldn't connect the dots. It is easy to say this, and that's exactly what we have to do. If I were training people I would train people who can make networks work. People networks, not just digital connections, but person-to-person networks.

Do you see any promise in the whole-of-government approach? What was your experience with the whole-of-government

approach during your time in government service?

McChrystal: Everybody agrees with the concept philosophically. I did a project after I retired with a Yale immunologist comparing counterinsurgency to the human immune system, particularly in its reaction to HIV/AIDS. It is extraordinarily similar. The human immune system is amazing at identifying the million potential infections that it's subjected to and then reacting to them, and learning from each experience. If you have an infection, your body learns from the experience and maintains the ability to combat it in the future. That's building up immunity and is how vaccinations work.

The whole-of-government approach is absolutely essential, but it's really challenging, for all the reasons we are familiar with. Everyone says we need to work on a whole-of-government basis; but failure starts with being out of alignment. We get to the National Security Council and say "we have to defeat al-Qaeda." Everybody agrees. We all walk out thinking we agree. But every organization has a different definition of what that means. Everyone therefore has a different set of actions in mind. And in many cases those actions are not only not aligned, sometimes they are conflicting. The individuals and individual agencies each think they are doing the right thing, but they're not aligned. There is no forcing function in the U.S. government to align them. Ask yourself, "Who in the U.S. government is in charge of the fight against ISIL?" The answer is, "the president." Then ask yourself, "Who is his agent?" The answer is, no one. Although some individuals may be more involved than others, there is no one officer below the president with true tasking authority; to direct the

CIA, the Department of Defense, and local police to work together. Officials can cajole, they can ask, but no one can direct other agencies to align. So achieving the whole-of-government approach, moving people away from inertia, moving people away from equities that they think are important, getting different personalities to work together, is extremely hard. Because responsibility is bifurcated, individuals don't think that they are ultimately responsible for the outcome. They want a good outcome, but they are not responsible for it. If the outcome isn't good they can blame it on someone else, or say "That's too bad, we didn't achieve a whole-of-government approach." Government employees don't get yearly bonuses based on the company bottom line. It is insidious that our structures, our cultures, and our incentive systems don't drive us to the outcomes we all want.

How did the "team of teams" approach come about.

McChrystal: "Team of teams" is a term that we gave to a set of lessons and associated behaviors that SOF learned in the fight in Iraq between 2003 and 2008. That was my term there, but the lessons have been sustained. It was an adaptation to the fact that we were structured and procedurally and culturally built on habits based on the pursuit of traditional terrorist organizations. Traditional terrorist organizations are hierarchical, pyramid-shaped organizations with tight control and a set of unique attributes, in some ways very similar to a U.S. corporation. We were designed to go after that kind of organization. Al-Qaeda was organized like that, and still is.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was different; it was al-Qaeda 2.0. AQI was born in 2003, and

built on the proliferation of information technology. Suddenly with cell phones, computers, and information technology in everybody's hands, AQI acted differently. It did not act like a pyramidal hierarchy. We kept trying to draw them in to a traditional structure and track them that way, because they "had to be that way." But they weren't. They were a network changing constantly, that operated under general directions from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. But they operated more according to his general intent. They inherited some of the attributes of the old centralized organization—being able to focus their efforts. But they had all the advantages of a network, learning constantly, adapting, being extraordinarily resilient. They were hard to hurt, because every time we took out key players, the organization adapted around them, no problem. We became the "team of teams." We had small teams, five and ten man teams that were the best that have ever been fielded in history. But they did not equal the sum of their parts because they were all separated—different cultures, different processes. We had all this capacity but it wasn't aligned to operate in a coordinated fashion. When I first took over the first thing I did was to apply traditional management, command and control; you assemble all your pieces, tell everybody what to do, the headquarters knows everything, information technology allows you to compile it. "I'm going to run this factory really well because I see everything and I have all these wonderful operators." But things happen too rapidly, and things are too complex to try and run everything centrally. This gets to John Arquilla's point; the operation has to become a network that operates in a fundamentally different way. Information has to flow laterally. There is still a role for a chain of command and for

hierarchy, but that role shifts from having a decisionmaker at the top of the operational sequence, with information going up, decisions getting made, directives going down and getting executed. The "team of teams" approach takes the central headquarters out of it. The organization operates much more laterally and starts to make decisions based upon common shared consciousness, which information technology enables allowing everybody to know the big picture as well as their local picture. Then you can push decisionmaking way down.

The reason you couldn't push decisionmaking down the command chain previously is that no one had the big picture; so they didn't know how to support the commander's vision. Technology just wasn't sufficient. Generals in World War I commanded from the rear, in the chateaus, because that's where the communications lines ran to. Today not only can you communicate with the commander from anywhere, you can communicate with everybody. And when everybody is informed, everybody can make decisions at their level with contextual confidence in what they're doing. Then you have to unlock them and let them make decisions. You have to make it a self-reinforcing network, and the role of the chain of command changes from making those big decisions to orchestrating this process; oiling the machine, increasing its speed, speeding it up, and slowing it down.

But also encouraging successful experiences and learning from the unsuccessful ones.

McChrystal: That's right; fixing broken pieces that don't work, making sure information flows, that you are learning every time. We

encouraged conversation and learning across the organization. This is a dramatic departure from the way we operated in the past. After the changes the organization worked with much greater speed. It learned much faster. It still made some mistakes, but so does every organization, network or hierarchy. But it could now approach the speed of the environment it was working within, because it was so much closer to the problems as they arose and the changes as they were detected.

How can the incoming administration, whichever it is, apply these principles to deal more effectively with the velocity of decisionmaking and adaptability in the way you described?

McChrystal: We are going to have to make some major changes. Some in structure, in the government, but more in process and culture. I just testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee about putting cross-functional teams into the Pentagon under the Secretary of Defense. That is a step, but it will not be a panacea. The first response is always, "I'm going to get good people, put them in the various departments across the government, and make things happen." But unless we operate differently, each one will try to fix their part of the problem. The new administration will take the first six months or a year, and get good people, but the situation won't improve. Again, not because the people are bad people, but the situation won't improve. Two or three years into the new administration, we will still have all the same gaps and seams with nobody responsible for them. Then we will change people, again, and go through the same thing. Unless we step back and implement a fundamentally different approach, and create a fundamentally different environment, nothing will ultimately change. Sometimes you need new organizations or structural changes, but I am always a little suspicious of those because they are never as effective as you expect them to be. Process and culture are more important. But someone will have to drive that hard and tell people what is being done and why. It cannot be subtle, and might even be frightening. None of the presidential candidates has mentioned this at all. None of the campaigns has touched this because what I'm talking about is extremely difficult. Making government more effective, particularly in the national security realm, is going to require a forceful and determined approach. It will break china and likely hurt people's feelings. But if it isn't done…. Look at what is happening in the corporate world; the companies that aren't making these changes... Look at what is happening to these behemoths that have scale, good professionals, and processes that have worked for a long time; suddenly they are looking the other way and "Boom!" Amazon.com crushes them. Uber comes in and crushes them. The new companies are operating with different mindsets and processes. It's an asymmetrical fight. The big organizations not only have their time-worn habits, it's hard to turn the ship around because it is so big. Just 25 years ago, just being big was good enough, because size and scale created barriers to entry. But one after another, look at Sears and Roebucks, Walmart, Chrysler under stress. All these big corporations are getting pounded even though they are pretty good at what they do.

But they're just not adapting to the emerging environment.

McChrystal: That's right. They're playing football and suddenly they are on the basketball court. It is really frustrating for them. It's not their fault. It's just their reality.

It seems like we have the wrong mind-set; war and peace, when it's neither of those the way we used to think of them. What we are in is more like perpetual struggle. In the 1990s two Chinese Air Force colonels wrote something called "Unrestricted Warfare." They seemed to get it.

McChrystal: Yes, I did read that. The Russians may get it also, though I haven't read enough on current Russian thinking to know for sure. I'm watching their actions, for example what they did in Crimea and are still doing in Ukraine, particularly on the tactical level. We didn't see the problem that way when we invaded Iraq or Afghanistan. When I would go to the Pentagon in late summer 2002, and speak to people planning the invasion of Iraq, I was really surprised, I had no idea they were doing that. And as I observed the planning process, I asked myself "Does anybody know what we're talking about?"

We were completely focused on how many ships and planes would be required over there. We got so wrapped around the axle on deployment and mobilization, we never stepped back and considered, "Wait a minute. We're about to go to war." **PRISM**

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- Develop a complex operations training and education community of practice to catalyze innovation and development of new knowledge, connect members for networking, share existing knowledge, and cultivate foundations of trust and habits of collaboration across the community

- Serve as a feedback and information conduit to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and broader U.S. Government policy leadership to support guidance and problem-solving across the community of practice

- Enable more effective networking, coordination, and synchronization to support the preparation of Department of Defense and other U.S. Government personnel for complex operations

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